Rev. R. W. L. Tighe.

From Rev. T. Stafford Drowne

Brooklyn. Dec. 1874.

THE

CHURCH OF THE FATHERS.

LONDON:

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THE

CHURCH OF THE FATHERS.

" Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners?"

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR J. G. F. & J. RIVINGTON,
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AND WATERLOO PLACE, PALL MALL.

1842.

TO MY DEAR AND MUCH ADMIRED

ISAAC WILLIAMS, B.D.,

FELLOW OF TRINITY COLLEGE, OXFORD,

THE SIGHT OF WHOM

CARRIES BACK HIS FRIENDS

TO ANCIENT, HOLY, AND HAPPY TIMES.

ADVERTISEMENT.

The following sketches, which, with two or three exceptions, have appeared in the British Magazine during 1833 and the following years, do not, as the author is very conscious, warrant a title of such high pretension, as that which was there prefixed to them, and is here preserved. But that title will at least show the object with which they were written, viz. to illustrate, as far as they go, the tone and modes of thought, the habits and manners of the early times of the church.

The author is aware how much a work is open to imperfection, and therefore to criticism, which is made up, in so great measure, of minute historical details and of translations; nor would he subject himself either to the one or the other, did he not think that the chance of bringing out or recom-

mending one or two of the characteristics of primitive Christianity was worth the risk of mistakes, which, after all, would but affect himself, and not his readers.

As to the translations, he is very sensible what constant and unflagging attention is requisite to catch the sense of the original, and what discrimination in the choice of English to do justice to it. And further, over and above actual faults, variety of tastes and fluctuation of moods among readers, make it impossible so to translate as to please every one; and if a translator be conscious to himself, as he may well be, of viewing either his original or version differently, according to the time or feeling with which he takes it up, much more will he resign himself to such differences of judgment in the case of other minds. It should be considered, too, that translation in itself is, after all, but a problem, how, two languages being given, the nearest approximation may be made in the second to the expression of ideas already conveyed through the medium of the first. The problem almost starts with the assumption that something must be sacrificed, and the chief

question is, what is the least sacrifice? In a balance of difficulties, one translator will aim at being critically correct, and will become obscure, cumbrous, and foreign; another will aim at being English, and will appear deficient in scholarship. While grammatical particles are followed out, the spirit evaporates; and while ease is secured, new ideas are intruded, or the point of the original is lost, or the drift of the context broken.

Under these circumstances, perhaps, it is fair to lay down that, while every care must be taken against the introduction of new, or the omission of existing ideas in the original text, yet in a book intended for general reading, faithfulness may be considered simply to consist in expressing in English the *sense* of the original, the actual words of the latter being viewed mainly as *directions into* its meaning, and scholarship being necessary in order to gain the full insight which they afford; and next, that, where something must be sacrificed, precision or intelligibility, it is better in a popular work to be understood by those who are not critics, than to be applauded by those who are.

In the present translations this principle has been taken to justify the omission of passages, and now and then the condensation of sentences, when the extract otherwise would have been too long; a studious endeavour being all along made to preserve the sense from injury.

February 21, 1840.

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THE

CHURCH OF THE FATHERS.

CHAPTER I.

AMBROSE AND JUSTINA.

"No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper: and every tongue that shall rise against thee in judgment, thou shalt condemn."

No considerate person will deny, that there is much in the spirit of the times, and in the actual changes which the British constitution has lately undergone, which makes it probable, or not improbable, that a material alteration will soon take place in the relations of the Church towards the State, to which it has been hitherto united. I do not say that it is out of the question that things may return to their former quiet and pleasant course, as in the good old time of king George III.; but the very chance that they will not, makes it a practical concern for every churchman to prepare himself for a change, and a practical question for the clergy, by *what instruments* the authority of religion is to be supported, should the

protection and recommendation of the government be withdrawn. Truth, indeed, will always support itself in the world by its native vigour; it will never die while heaven and earth last, but be handed down from saint to saint until the end of all things. But this was the case before our Lord came, and is still the case, as we may humbly trust, in heathen countries. My question concerns *the Church*, that peculiar institution which Christ set up as a visible home and memorial of truth; and which, as being in this world, must be manifested by means of this world. I know it is common to make light of this solicitude about the Church, under the notion that the Gospel may be propagated without it,—or that men are about the same under every dispensation, their hearts being in fault, and not their circumstances,—or for other reasons, better or worse as it may be; to all which I am accustomed to answer, (and I do not see how I can be in error,) that, if Christ had not meant His Church to answer a purpose, He would not have set it up, and that our business is not to speculate about possible dispensations of religion, but to resign and devote ourselves to that in which we are actually placed.

Hitherto the English Church has depended on the *State*, i. e. on the ruling powers in the country—the king and the aristocracy; and this is so natural and religious a position of things when viewed in the abstract, and in its actual working has been productive of such excellent fruits in the Church, such quietness, such sobriety, such external propriety of conduct, and such freedom from doctrinal excesses, that we must ever look back upon the period of ecclesiastical history so characterized with affectionate

thoughts; particularly on the reigns of our blessed martyr St. Charles, and king George the Good. But these recollections of the past must not engross our minds, or hinder us from looking at things as they are, and as they will be soon, and from inquiring what is intended by Providence to take the place of the time-honoured instrument, which He has broken (if it be yet broken), the regal and aristocratical power. I shall offend many men when I say, we must *look to the people;* but let them give me a hearing.

Well can I understand their feelings. Who at first sight does not dislike the thoughts of gentlemen and clergymen depending for their maintenance and their reputation on their flocks? of their strength, as a visible power, lying not in their birth, the patronage of the great, and the endowment of the Church (as hitherto), but in the homage of a multitude? I confess I have before now had a great repugnance to the notion myself; and if I have overcome it, and turned from the government to the people, it has been simply because I was forced to do so. It is not we who desert the government, but the government that has left us; we are forced back upon those below us, because those above us will not honour us: there is no help for it, I say. But, in truth, the prospect is not so bad as it seems at first sight. The chief and obvious objection to the clergy being thrown on the people, lies in the probable lowering of Christian views, and the adulation of the vulgar, which would be its consequence; and the state of dissenters is appealed to as an evidence of the danger. But let us recollect that we are an *apostolical* body; we were not *made*, nor can be

unmade by our flocks; and if our influence is to depend on *them*, yet the sacraments reside with *us*. We have that with us, which none but ourselves possess, the mantle of the Apostles; and this, properly understood and cherished, will ever keep us from being the creatures of a populace.

And what in time to come may become necessary, is a more religious state of things also. It will not be denied that, according to the Scripture view of the Church, though all are admitted into her pale, and the rich inclusively, yet, the poor are her members with a peculiar suitableness, and by a special right. Scripture is ever casting slurs upon wealth, and making much of poverty. "To the poor the Gospel is preached." "God hath chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom." "If thou wilt be perfect, sell all that thou hast, and give to the poor." To this must be added, the undeniable fact that the Church, when purest and when most powerful, *has* depended for its influence on its consideration with the many. Becket's letters, lately published [1], have struck me not a little; but of course I now refer, not to such dark ages as most Englishmen consider these, but to the primitive Church,—the Church of St. Athanasius and St. Ambrose. With a view of showing the power of the Church at that time, I will in this chapter give some account of certain ecclesiastical proceedings in the city of Milan, A. D. 385, during the holy season of Lent,—Ambrose being bishop, and Justina and her son, the younger Valentinian, the reigning powers.

[1] Vide British Magazine, 1832, &c. And Froude's Remains, Part ii. vol. II.

Ambrose was eminently a popular bishop, as every one knows who has read ever so little of his history. His very promotion to the sacred office was owing to an excitement of the populace. Auxentius, his Arian predecessor in the see of Milan, died, A. D. 374, upon which the bishops of the province wrote to the then emperor, Valentinian the First, who was in Gaul, requesting him to name the person who was to succeed him. This was a prudent step on their part, Arianism having introduced such matter for discord and faction among the Milanese, that it was dangerous to submit the election to the people at large, though the majority of them were orthodox. Valentinian, however, declined to avail himself of the permission thus given him; the choice was thrown upon the voices of the people, and the cathedral, which was the place of assembling, was soon a scene of disgraceful uproar, as the bishops had anticipated. Ambrose was at that time civil governor of the province of which Milan was the capital: and, the tumult increasing, he was obliged to interfere in person, with a view of preventing its ending in open sedition. He was a man of grave character, and had been in youth brought up with a sister who had devoted herself to the service of God in a single life; but as yet was only a catechumen, though above thirty years of age. Arrived at the scene of tumult, he addressed the assembled crowds, exhorting them to peace and order. While he was speaking, a child's voice, as is reported, was heard in the midst of the crowd to say, "Ambrose is bishop;" the populace took up the cry, and both parties in the Church, Catholic and Arian, whether influenced by a sudden enthusiasm, or willing

to take a man who was unconnected with party, voted unanimously for the election of Ambrose. It is not wonderful that the subject of this sudden decision should have been unwilling to quit his civil office for a station of such high responsibility ; for many days he fought against the popular voice, and that by the most extravagant expedients. He absconded, and was not recovered till the emperor, confirming the act of the people of Milan, published an edict against all who should conceal him. Under these strange circumstances, Ambrose was at length consecrated bishop. His ordination was canonical only on the supposition that it came under those rare exceptions, for which the rules of the Church allow, when they speak of election " by divine grace," by the immediate suggestion of God ; and if ever a bishop's character and works might be appealed to as evidence of the divine purpose, surely Ambrose was the subject of that singular and extraordinary favour. From the time of his call he devoted his life and abilities to the service of Christ. He bestowed his personal property on the poor: his lands on the Church; making his sister tenant for life. Next he gave himself up to the peculiar studies necessary for the due execution of his high duties, till he gained that deep insight into Catholic truth, which is evidenced in his works, and in no common measure in relation to Arianism, which had been the dominant creed in Milan for the twenty years preceding his elevation. Basil of Cæsarea was at this time the main pillar of Catholic truth in the East, having succeeded Athanasius of Alexandria, who died about the time that both Basil and Ambrose were advanced to their re-

spective sees. He addresses the new bishop in these words in an extant epistle :—

" Proceed in thy work, thou man of God ; and since thou hast not received the Gospel of Christ of men, neither wast taught it, but the Lord Himself translated thee from among the world's judges to the chair of the Apostles, fight the good fight, set right the infirmities of the people, wherever the Arian madness has affected them ; renew the old foot-prints of the Fathers, and by frequent correspondence build up thy love towards us, of which thou hast already laid the foundation."—*Ep.* 197.

Ambrose had presided in his see about eleven years at the time when the events took place which are here to be related. Valentinian was dead, as well as his eldest son Gratian. His second son, who bore his own name, was emperor of the West, under the tutelage of Justina, who had been his second wife.

Justina was an Arian, and brought up her son in her own heretical views. This was about the time when the heresy was finally subdued in the Eastern Churches ; the council of Constantinople had lately been held, many Arian bishops had conformed, and laws had been passed by Theodosius against those who held out. It was natural under such circumstances that a number of the latter should flock to the court of Milan for protection and patronage. The Gothic officers of the palace were Arians also, as might be supposed, after the creed of their nation. At length they obtained a bishop of their persuasion from the East ; and having now the form of an ecclesiastical body, they used the influence of Valentinian,

or rather of his mother, to extort from Ambrose one of the churches of Milan for their worship.

The bishop was summoned to the palace before the assembled court, and was formally asked to relinquish St. Victor's Church, then called the Portian Basilica, which was without the walls, for the Arian worship. His duty was plain; the churches were the property of Christ; he was the representative of Christ, and was therefore bound not to cede what was committed to him in trust. This is the account of the matter given by himself:—

"Do not," he says, "O emperor, embarrass yourself with the thought that you have an emperor's right over sacred things. Exalt not yourself, but, as you would enjoy a continuance of power, be God's subject. It is written, God's to God, and Cæsar's to Cæsar. The palace is the emperor's, the churches are the bishop's."—*Ep.* 20.

This argument, which is true at all times, was much more convincing in an age like the primitive, before men had begun to deny that Christ had left a visible representative of Himself in His Church. If there was a body to whom the concerns of religion were intrusted, there could be no doubt it was that over which Ambrose presided. It had been there planted ever since Milan became Christian, its ministers were descended from the Apostles, and it was the legitimate trustee of the sacred property. But in our day men have been taught to doubt whether there *is* one Apostolic Church, though it is mentioned in the Creed: nay, it is grievous to say, clergymen have sometimes forgotten, sometimes made light of

their own privileges. Accordingly, when a question arises now about the spoliation of the Church, we are obliged to betake ourselves to the rules of *national* law; we appeal to precedents, or we urge the civil consequences of the measure, or we use other arguments which, good as they may be, are too refined to be very popular. Ambrose rested his resistance on grounds which the people understood at once, and recognized as irrefragable. They felt that he was only refusing to surrender a trust. They rose in a body, and thronged the palace gates. A company of soldiers was sent to disperse them; and a riot was on the point of ensuing, when the ministers of the court became alarmed, and despatched Ambrose to appease the tumult, with the pledge that no further attempt should be made on the possessions of the Church. Now some reader will here interrupt the narrative, perhaps, with something of an indignant burst about connecting the cause of religion with mobs and outbreaks. To whom I would reply, that the multitude of men is always rude and intemperate, and needs restraint,—religion does not make them so. But being so, it is better they should be zealous about religion, and repressed by religion, as in this case, than flow and ebb again under the irrational influences of this world. A mob, indeed, is always wayward and faithless; but it is a good sign when it is susceptible of the hopes and fears of the world to come. Is it not probable that, when religion is thus a popular subject, it may penetrate, soften, or stimulate hearts which otherwise would know nothing of its power? However, this is not, properly speaking, my present point, which is to show how a Church

may be in "favour with all the people" without any subserviency to them. To return to our history.

Justina, failing to intimidate, made various underhand attempts to remove the champion of orthodoxy. She endeavoured to raise the people against him. Failing in this object, next, by the promise of offices and places of dignity, she set on foot various projects to seize him in church, and carry him off into banishment. One man went so far as to take lodgings near the church, and had a carriage in readiness, in order to avail himself of any opportunity which offered to convey him away. But none of these attempts succeeded.

This was in the month of March; as Easter drew on, more vigorous steps were taken by the court. On April 4, the Friday before Palm Sunday, the demand of a church for the Arians was renewed; the pledges which the government had given, that no further steps should be taken in the matter, being perhaps evaded by changing the church which was demanded. Ambrose was now asked for the New or Roman Basilica, which was within the walls, and larger than the Portian. It was dedicated to the Apostles, and (I may add, for the sake of the antiquarian) was built in the form of a cross. When the bishop refused in the same language as before, the imperial minister returned to the demand of the Portian Church; but the people interfering, and being clamorous against the proposal, he was obliged to retire to the palace to report how matters stood.

On Palm Sunday, after the lessons and sermon had been read in the Basilica, in which he officiated, Ambrose was engaged in teaching the creed to the

candidates for baptism, who, as was customary, had been catechized during Lent, and were to be admitted into the Church on the night before Easter-day. News was brought him that the officers of the court had taken possession of the Portian Church, and were arranging the imperial hangings in token of its being confiscated to the emperor; on the other hand, that the people were flocking thither. Ambrose continued the service of the day; but, when he was in the midst of the celebration of the Eucharistical rite, a second message came that one of the Arian priests was in the hands of the populace.

"On this news (he says, writing to his sister), I could not keep from shedding many bitter tears, and, while I made oblation, I prayed God's protection that no blood might be shed in the Church's quarrel: or if so, that it might be mine, and that, not for my people only, but for the ungodly."—*Ep.* 20.

At the same time he despatched a number of his clergy to the spot, who had influence enough to rescue the unfortunate man from the mob.

Though Ambrose so far seems to have been supported by a popular movement, yet the proceedings of the following week showed that he had the great mass of respectable citizens on his side. The imprudent measures of the court, in punishing those whom it considered its enemies, disclosed to the world their number and importance. The tradesmen of the city were fined two hundred pounds of gold, and many were thrown into prison. All the officers, moreover, and dependents of the courts of justice, were ordered to keep in-doors during the continuance

of the disorders; and men of higher rank were menaced with severe consequences, unless the Basilica were surrendered.

Such were the acts by which the imperial court solemnized Passion week. At length a fresh interview was sought with Ambrose, which shall be described in his own words:—

"I had a meeting with the counts and tribunes, who urged me to give up the Basilica without delay, on the ground that the emperor was but acting on his undoubted rights, as possessing sovereign power over all things. I made answer, that if he asked me for what was *my own*—for instance, my estate, my money, or the like—I would make no opposition: though, to tell the truth, all that was mine was the property of the poor; but that he had no sovereignty over things sacred. If my patrimony is demanded, seize upon it; my person, here I am. Would you take to prison or to death? I go with pleasure. Far be it from me to entrench myself within the circle of a multitude, or to clasp the altar in supplication for my life; rather I will be a sacrifice for the altar-sake.

"In good truth, when I heard that soldiers were sent to take possession of the Basilica, I was horrified at the prospect of bloodshed, which might issue in ruin to the whole city. I prayed God that I might not survive the ruin, which might ensue, of such a place; nay, of Italy itself. I shrunk from the odium of having occasioned slaughter, and would sooner have given my own throat to the knife. . . . Presently they bade me calm the people. I replied, that all I

could do was not to inflame them; but God alone could appease them. For myself, if I appeared to have instigated them, it was the duty of the government to proceed against me, or to banish me. Upon this they left me."

Ambrose spent the rest of Palm Sunday in the same Basilica in which he had been officiating in the morning: at night he went to his own house, that the civil power might have the opportunity of arresting him if it was thought advisable.

The attempt to gain the Portian seems now to have been dropped; but on the Wednesday troops were marched before day-break to take possession of the New Church, which was within the walls. Ambrose, upon the news of this fresh movement, used the weapons of an apostle. He did not seek to disturb them in their possession; but, attending service at his own church, he was content to threaten the soldiers with a sentence of excommunication. Meanwhile the New Church, where the soldiers were posted, began to fill with a larger congregation than it ever contained before the persecution. Ambrose was requested to go thither, but, desirous of drawing the people away from the scene of imperial tyranny, lest a riot should ensue, he remained in the Portian, and began a comment on the lesson of the day, which was from the book of Job. First, he commended them for the Christian patience and resignation with which they had hitherto borne their trial, which indeed was, on the whole, surprising, considering the usual inflammable nature of a multitude. "We petition your majesty," they said to the emperor; "we

use no force, we feel no fear, but we petition." It is common in the leader of a multitude to profess peaceableness, but very unusual for the multitude itself to persevere in doing so. Ambrose went on to observe, that both they and he had in their way been tempted, as Job was, by the powers of evil. For himself, his peculiar trial had lain in the reflection that the extraordinary measures of the government, the movements of the Gothic guards, the fines of the tradesmen, the various sufferings of the saints, all arose from what might be considered his *obstinacy* in not yielding to what seemed an overwhelming necessity, and giving the Basilica to the Arians. Yet he felt that to do so would be to peril his soul ; so that the request was but the voice of the tempter, as he spoke in Job's wife, to make him "say a word against God, and die," to betray his trust, and incur the sentence of spiritual death.

Before this time the soldiers who had been sent to the New Church, from dread of the threat of excommunication, had declared against the sacrilege, and joined his congregation at the Portian ; and now the news came that the royal hangings had been taken down. Soon after, as he was continuing his address to the people, a fresh message came to him from the court, to ask him, whether he had an intention of domineering over his sovereign? Ambrose, in answer, showed the pains he had taken to observe a passive obedience to the emperor's will, and to hinder disturbance: then he added—

"Priests have by old right bestowed sovereignty, never assumed it ; and it is a common saying, that

sovereigns have coveted the priesthood more than priests the sovereignty. Christ hid Himself, lest He should be made a king. Yes! we have a dominion of our own. The dominion of the priest lies in his helplessness, as it is said, 'When I am weak, then am I strong.'"

And so ended the dispute for a time. On Good Friday the court gave way; the guards were ordered from the Basilica, and the fines were remitted. I end for the present with the view which Ambrose took of the prospect before him:—

"Thus the matter rests; I wish I could say, has ended: but the emperor's words are of that angry sort which shows that a more severe contest is in store. He calls me a tyrant, or what is worse still. He implied this when his ministers were entreating him, on the petition of the soldiers, to attend Church. 'Should Ambrose bid you,' he made answer, 'doubtless you would give me to him in chains.' I leave you to judge what these words promise. Persons present were all shocked at hearing them; but there are parties who exasperate him."

CHAPTER II.

AMBROSE AND VALENTINIAN.

"Look unto Zion, the city of our solemnities: thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down: not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed, neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken."

In the opposition which Ambrose made to the Arians, as already related, there is no appearance of his appealing to any law of the empire in justification of his refusal to surrender the Basilica to them. He rested it upon the simple basis of the Divine law, a common-sense argument which there was no evading. "The Basilica has been made over to Christ; the Church is His trustee; I am its ruler. I dare not alienate the Lord's property. He who does so, does it at his peril." Indeed he elsewhere expressly repudiates the principle of dependence on human law. "Law," he says, "has not brought the Church together, but the faith of Christ." However, Justina determined to have human law on her side. She persuaded her son to make it a capital offence in any one, either publicly or privately, even by petition, to interfere with the assemblies of the Arians; a provision which admitted a fair, and might also bear,

and did in fact receive, a most tyrannical interpretation. Benevolus, the secretary of state, from whose office the edict was to proceed, refused to draw it up, and resigned his place; but of course others less scrupulous were easily found to succeed him. At length it was promulgated on the 21st of January of the next year, A.D. 386, and a fresh attempt soon followed on the part of the court to get possession of the Portian Basilica, which was without the walls.

The line of conduct which Ambrose had adopted remained equally clear and straight, whether before or after the promulgation of this edict. It was his duty to use all the means which Christ has given the Church to prevent the profanation of the Basilica. But soon a new question arose for his determination. An imperial message was brought him to retire from the city at once, with any friends who chose to attend him. It is not certain whether this was intended as an absolute command, or (as his words rather imply) a recommendation on the part of government to save themselves the odium, and him the suffering, of public and more severe proceedings. Even if it were the former, it does not appear that a Christian bishop, so circumstanced, need obey it; for what was it but in other words to say, "Depart from the Basilica, and leave it us?"—the very order which he had already withstood. The words of Scripture, which bid Christians, if persecuted in one city, flee to another, are evidently, from the form of them, a discretionary rule, grounded on the expediency of each occasion, as it arises. A mere threat is not a persecution, nor is a command; and, though we are bound to obey our civil rulers, the welfare of the Church has

a prior claim upon our obedience. Other bishops took the same view of the case with Ambrose; and, accordingly, he determined to stay in Milan till removed by main force, or cut off by violence. The reader shall hear his own words in a sermon which he delivered upon the occasion:—

"I see what is unusual with you, that you are under a sudden excitement, and are turning your eyes on me. What can be the reason of this? Is it that you saw or heard that an imperial message has been brought to me by the tribunes desiring me to depart hence whither I would, and to take with me all who would follow me? What! did you fear that I would desert the Church, and, for fear of my life, abandon you? Yet you might have attended to my answer. I said that I could not, for an instant, entertain the thought of deserting the Church, in that I feared the Lord of all more than the emperor of the day: in truth, that, should force hurry me off, it would be my body, not my mind, which suffered the violence; that, should he act in the way of kingly power, I was prepared to suffer after the manner of a priest.

"Why, then, are you thus disturbed? I will never leave you of my own will; but if compelled, I may not resist. I shall still have the power of lamenting, of weeping, of moaning: when weapons, soldiers, Goths assail me, tears are my weapons, for such are the defence of a priest. In any other way I neither ought to resist, nor am able; but as to retiring and deserting the Church, this is not like me; and for this reason, lest I seem to do so from dread

of some heavier punishment. Ye yourselves know that it is my principle to submit to our rulers, but not to give way to them; to present myself readily to legal punishment, and not to fear what is in contemplation.

"A proposal was made to me to deliver up at once the church plate. I made answer, that I was ready to give any thing that was my own, estate or house, gold or silver; but that I could withdraw no property from God's temple, nor surrender what was put into my hands to preserve, and not to surrender. Besides, that I had a care for the emperor's well-being; since it was as little safe for him to receive as for me to surrender: and I entreated him to suffer the words of a free-spoken priest, for his own good, and to keep clear of injuring his Lord.

"You recollect to-day's lesson about holy Naboth and his vineyard. The king asked him to make it over to him, as a ground, not for vines, but for common pot-herbs. What was his answer? 'God forbid I should give to thee the inheritance of my fathers!' The king was saddened when another's property was justly denied him; next he was beguiled by a woman's counsel. Naboth shed his blood rather than give up his vines. Shall he refuse his vineyard, and we surrender the Church of Christ?

"What contumacy then was there in my answer? I did but say at the interview, 'God forbid I should surrender Christ's heritage!' I added, 'the heritage of our fathers;' yes, of our Dionysius, who died in exile for the faith's sake, of Eustorgius the Confessor, of Myrocles, and of all the other faithful bishops back. I answered as a priest: let the emperor act

as an emperor; he shall rob me of my life sooner than of my fidelity.

"In what respect was my answer other than respectful? Does the emperor wish to tax us? I do not refuse it. The church lands pay taxes. Does he require our lands? He has power to claim them; we will not prevent him. The contributions of the people will suffice for the poor. Let not our enemies take umbrage at our lands; they may take them, if it please the emperor; not that I give them, but I make no opposition. Do they seek my gold? I can truly say, silver and gold I seek not. But they bring against me my raising contributions. I have no great fear of the charge. I confess I have stipendiaries; they are *the poor of Christ's flock*[1]; a treasure which I am well used in collecting. May this at all times be my offence, to exact contributions for the poor. And if they accuse me of defending myself by means of them, I am far from denying, I court the charge. The poor *are* my defenders, but it is by their prayers. Blind though they be, lame, feeble, and aged, yet they have a strength greater than that of the stout warriors. In a word, charity to them is a claim upon the Lord; as it is written, 'He who giveth to the poor, lendeth to God;' whereas a warrior's protection has oftentimes no hold upon Divine grace.

"They say, too, that the people are misled by the verses of my hymns. I frankly confess this also. Truly they have in them a high strain above all other influence. For can any strain have more of influ-

[1] Pauperes Christi.

ence than the confession of the Holy Trinity, which is proclaimed day by day by the voice of the whole people? Each is eager to rival his fellows in confessing, as he well knows how, in sacred verses, his faith in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus all are made teachers, who else were scarce equal to being scholars.

"No one can deny that in what we say we pay to our sovereign due honour. What indeed can be higher than to style him a son of the Church? In saying this, we are loyal to him without sinning against God. For the emperor is *within* the Church, but *not over the Church;* and a religious sovereign seeks, not rejects, the Church's aid. This is our doctrine, modestly avowed, but enforced without wavering. Though they threaten fire, or the sword, or transportation, we, Christ's poor servants, have learned not to fear. And to the fearless nothing is frightful; as Scripture says, 'Their blows are like the arrows of a child.'"—*Serm. contr. Auxent.*

Mention is made in this extract of the Psalmody which Ambrose adopted about this time. The history of its introduction is curiously connected with the subject before us, and interesting, inasmuch as this was the beginning of a change in the style of Church music, which spread over the West, and continues even among ourselves to this day.

Soldiers had been sent, as in the former year, to surround the Portian Basilica, in order to prevent the catholic service there; but being themselves Christians, and afraid of excommunication, they went so far as to allow the people to enter, but would not

let them leave the building. This was not so great an inconvenience to them as might appear at first sight: for the early Basilicas were not unlike the heathen temples, or our own collegiate chapels, that is, part of a range of buildings, which contained the lodgings of the ecclesiastics, and formed a fortress in themselves, which could easily be blockaded from within or without. Accordingly, the people remained shut up within the sacred precincts some days, and the bishop with them. There seems to have been a notion, too, that he was to be seized for exile, or put to death; and they naturally kept about him to "see the end," to suffer with him or for him, according as their tempers and principles led them. Some went so far as to barricade the doors of the Basilica[1]; nor could Ambrose prevent this proceeding, unnecessary as it was, from the good feelings of the soldiery towards them, and indeed impracticable in such completeness as might be sufficient for security.

Some persons may think that Ambrose ought to have used his utmost influence against it, whereas in his sermon to the people he merely insists on its uselessness, and urges the propriety of looking simply to God, and not at all to such expedients, for deliverance. It must be recollected, however, that he and his people in no sense drew the sword from its sheath; he confined himself to passive resistance. He had violated no law; the Church's property was sought by a tyrant: without using any violence, he took possession of that which he was bound to defend with his life. He placed himself

[1] Vide 2 Kings vi. 32.

upon the sacred territory, and bade them take it and him together, after St. Laurence's pattern, who submitted to be burned rather than deliver up the goods with which he had been entrusted for the sake of the poor. However, it was evidently a very uncomfortable state of things for a Christian bishop, who might seem to be responsible for all the consequences, yet was without control over them. A riot might commence any moment, which it would not be in his power to arrest. Under these circumstances, with admirable presence of mind, he contrived to keep the people quiet, and to direct their minds to higher objects than those around them, by psalmody. Sacred chanting had been one especial way in which the catholics of Antioch had kept alive, in Arian times, the spirit of orthodoxy. And from the first a peculiar kind of singing—the antiphonal or responsorial, answering to our cathedral chanting—had been used in honour of the sacred doctrine which heresy assailed. Ignatius, the disciple of St. Peter, was reported to have introduced the practice into the Church of Antioch, in the doxology to the Trinity. Flavian, afterwards bishop of that see, revived it during the Arian usurpation, to the great edification and encouragement of the oppressed catholics. Chrysostom used it in the vigils at Constantinople, in opposition to the same heretical party ; and similar vigils had been established by Basil in the monasteries of Cappadocia. The assembled multitude, confined day and night within the gates of the Basilica, were in the situation of a monastic body without its discipline, and Ambrose rightly considered that the novelty and solemnity of the oriental chants, in praise of the

blessed Trinity, would both interest and sober them during the dangerous temptation to which they were now exposed. The expedient had even more successful results than the bishop anticipated; the soldiers were affected by the music, and took part in it; and, as we hear nothing more of the blockade, we must suppose that it thus ended, the government being obliged to overlook what they could not prevent.

It may be interesting to the reader to see Augustine's notice of this occurrence, and the effect of the psalmody upon himself, at the time of his baptism.

"The pious populace, (he says in his Confessions,) was keeping vigils in the Church, prepared to die, O Lord, with their bishop, thy servant. There was my mother, thy handmaid, surpassing others in anxiety and watching, and making prayers her life. I, uninfluenced as yet by the fire of thy Spirit, was roused however by the terror and agitation of the city. Then it was that hymns and psalms, after the oriental rite, were introduced, lest the spirits of the flock should fail under the wearisome delay."—*Confess.* ix. 15.

In the same passage, speaking of his baptism, he says:

"How many tears I shed during the performance of thy hymns and chants, keenly affected by the notes of thy melodious Church! My ears drank up those sounds, and they distilled into my heart as sacred truths, and overflowed thence again in pious emotion, and gushed forth into tears, and I was happy in them."—*Ibid.* 14.

Elsewhere he says:—

"Sometimes, from over-jealousy, I would entirely put from me and from the Church the melodies of the sweet chants which we use in the Psalter, lest our ears seduce us; and the way of Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, seems the safer, who, as I have often heard, made the reader chant with so slight a change of note, that it was more like speaking than singing. And yet when I call to mind the tears I shed when I heard the chants of thy Church in the infancy of my recovered faith, and reflect that at this time I am affected, not by the mere music, but by the subject, brought out, as it is, by clear voices and appropriate tune, then, in turn, I confess how useful is the practice."—*Ibid.* x. 50.

Such was the influence of the Ambrosian chants when first introduced at Milan by the great bishop whose name they bear; there they are in use still, in all the majestic austerity which gave them their original power, and a great part of the western Church uses that modification of them which pope Gregory introduced at Rome in the beginning of the seventh century.

Ambrose implies, in the sermon from which extracts were given above, that a persecution, reaching even to the infliction of bodily sufferings, was at this time afflicting the bishops of the Exarchate. Certainly he himself was all along in imminent peril of his life, or of sudden removal from Milan. However, he made it a point to frequent the public places and religious meetings, as usual; and indeed, it appears that he

was as safe there as at home, for he narrowly escaped assassination from a hired ruffian of the empress's, who made his way to his bed-chamber for the purpose. Magical arts were also practised against him, as a more secret and certain method of ensuring his destruction.

I ought to have mentioned, before this, the challenge sent to him by the Arian bishop to dispute publicly with him on the sacred doctrine in controversy; but was unwilling to interrupt the narrative of the contest about the Basilica. I will here translate portions of a letter sent by him, on the occasion, to the emperor.

"Clementissimo Imperatori et beatissimo Augusto Valentiniano, Ambrosius episcopus—

"Dalmatius, tribune and notary, has come to me, at your majesty's desire, as he assures me, to require me to choose umpires, as Auxentius [1] has done on his part. Not that he informed me who they were which had already been named; but merely said that the dispute was to take place in the consistory, in your Majesty's presence, as final arbitrator of it.

"I trust my answer will prove satisfactory. No one should call me contumacious, if I allege what your father, of blessed memory, not only sanctioned by word of mouth, but even by a law:—That in cases of faith, or any ecclesiastical function, the judges should be both 'competent by office and qualified by

[1] The Arian bishop, who had lately come from the East to Milan, had taken the name of Auxentius, the heretical predecessor of Ambrose.

profession,' thus the rescript runs; in other words, he would have priests decide about priests. And this extended even to the case of allegations of immorality.

"When was it you ever heard, most gracious sovereign, that in a question of faith laymen should be judges of a bishop? What! have courtly manners so bent our backs that we have forgotten the rights of the priesthood, that I should of myself put into another's hands what God has bestowed upon me? Once grant that a layman may set a bishop right, and see what will follow. The layman must discuss, while the bishop listens; the bishop must be the pupil of the layman. Yet, whether we turn to Scripture or history, who will venture to deny that in a question of faith, in a question, I say, of faith, it has ever been the bishop's business to judge a Christian emperor, not the emperor's to judge the bishop?

"When, through God's blessing, you live to be old, then you will have your thoughts concerning the fidelity of that bishop who places the rights of the priesthood at the mercy of laymen. Your father, who arrived, through God's blessing, at maturer years, was in the habit of saying, 'I have no right to judge between bishops;' but your majesty says, 'I ought to judge.' He, even though baptized into Christ's body, thought himself unequal to the burden of such a judgment; your majesty, who still has to earn a title to the sacrament, claims to judge in a matter of faith, a stranger to the sacrament to which that faith belongs.

"But Ambrose is not so precious, as to dare for his own sake to degrade the priesthood. One man's life is

not so precious as the dignity of all those bishops who have advised me to this address; and who suggested that heathens, perhaps, or Jews, might be the choice of Auxentius, whom allowing to decide concerning Christ, we should be granting a triumph over Him. What would pleasure them but blasphemies against Him?—What would satisfy them but the shocking denial of His divinity—agreeing, as they do, full well with the Arian, who pronounces Christ to be a creature, after the very creed of Jews and heathens? I would have come to your majesty's court, to offer these remarks in person; but neither my bishops nor my people would let me; for they said, that, when matters of faith were discussed in the Church, the people ought to be present.

"I could have wished your majesty had omitted the alternative, which you sent me,—of betaking myself to exile, whither I would. I was abroad every day; no one guarded me. I was at the mercy of all the world; surely then you should have secured my departure to a place of your own choosing. Now the priests say to me, 'There is little difference between voluntarily leaving and betraying the altar of Christ; for when you leave, you betray it.'

"May it please your majesty graciously to accept this apology of mine for declining to appear in the imperial court. I have not learnt to attend it, except in your behalf; nor have I the skill to strive for victory within the palace, neither knowing, nor caring to know, its secrets."—*Ep.* 21.

The reader will observe an allusion in the last sentence of this defence to a service Ambrose had

rendered the emperor and his mother, upon the murder of Gratian; when, at the request of Justina, he undertook the difficult embassy to the usurper Maximus, and was the means of preserving the peace of Italy. This Maximus now interfered to defend him against the parties whom he had on a former occasion defended against Maximus; but other and more remarkable occurrences interposed in his behalf, which shall be mentioned in the next chapter.

CHAPTER III.

THE MARTYRS GERVASIUS AND PROTASIUS.

"All Thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia, out of the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad."

A TERMINATION was at length put to the persecution of the Church of Milan, by an occurrence of a very different nature from any which take place in these days. And since such events as I am to mention do not occur now, we are apt to argue, not very logically, that they did not occur then. I conceive this to be the main objection which will be felt against the following narrative. Miracles never took place then, because we do not see reason to believe that they take place now. But it should be recollected, that if there are no miracles at present, neither are there at present any martyrs. Might we not as cogently argue that no martyrdoms took place then, because no martyrdoms take place now? And might not St. Ambrose and his brethren have as reasonably disbelieved the possible existence of parsonages and pony carriages in the nineteenth century, as we the existence of martyrs and miracles in the primitive age? Now the account which is to follow does indeed relate to miracles, but then it relates to martyrs also.

Another objection which may be more reasonably urged against the narrative is this: that in the fourth century there were many miraculous tales which even Fathers of the Church believed, but which no one of any way of thinking believes now. It will be argued, that because some miracles are alleged which did not really take place, that therefore none which are alleged took place either. But I am disposed to reason just the contrary way. Pretences to revelation make it probable that there is a true revelation; pretences to miracles make it probable that there are real ones; falsehood is the mockery of truth; false Christs argue a true Christ; a shadow implies a substance. If it be replied that the Scripture miracles are these true miracles, and that it is they, and none other but they, none after them, which suggested the counterfeit; I ask in turn, if so, what becomes of the original objection, that *no* miracles are true, because some are false? If this be so, the Scripture miracles are to be believed as little as those after them; and this is the very plea which infidels have urged. No; it is not reasonable to limit the scope of an argument according to the exigency of our particular conclusions; we have no leave to apply the argument *for* miracles only to the first century, and that *against* miracles only to the fourth. If forgery in some miracles proves forgery in all, this tells against the first as well as against the fourth century; if forgery in some argues truth in others, this avails for the fourth as well as for the first.

And I will add, that even credulousness on other occasions does not necessarily disqualify a person's evidence for a particular alleged miracle; for the

sight of one true miracle could not but dispose a man to believe others readily, nay too readily, that is, would make him what is called credulous.

Now let these remarks be kept in mind while I go on to describe the alleged occurrence which has led to them. I know of no intrinsic objection to it in particular, viewed in itself; the main objections are such antecedent considerations as I have been noticing. If Elisha's bones restored a dead man to life, I know of no antecedent reason why the relics of Gervasius and Protasius should not, as in the instance to be considered, have given sight to the blind.

The circumstances were these:—St. Ambrose, at the juncture of affairs which I have described in the foregoing pages, was proceeding to the dedication of a certain church at Milan, which remains there to this day, with the name of "St. Ambrose the Greater:" and was urged by the people to bury relics of martyrs under the altar, as he had lately done in the case of the Basilica of the Apostles. This was according to the usage of those times, desirous thereby both of honouring those who had braved death for Christ's sake, and of hallowing religious places with the mortal instruments of their triumph. Ambrose in consequence gave orders to open the ground in the church of St. Nabor, as a spot likely to have been the burying-place of martyrs during the heathen persecutions.

Augustine, who was in Milan at the time, alleges that Ambrose was directed in his search by a dream. Ambrose himself is evidently reserved on the subject in his letter to his sister, though he was accustomed

to make her his confidant in his ecclesiastical proceedings; he only speaks of his heart having burnt within him in presage of what was to happen. The digging commenced, and in due time two skeletons were discovered, of great size, perfect, and disposed in an orderly way; the head of each, however, separated from the body, and a quantity of blood about. That they were the remains of martyrs, none could reasonably doubt; and their names were ascertained to be Gervasius and Protasius; how, it does not appear, but certainly it was not so alleged on any traditionary information or for any popular object, since they proved to be quite new names to the Church of the day, though some elderly men at length recollected hearing them in former years. Nor is it wonderful that the saints should have been forgotten, considering the number of the Apostolic martyrs, among whom Gervasius and Protasius appear to have a place.

It seems to have been usual in that day to verify the genuineness of relics by bringing some of the *energumeni*, or possessed with devils, to them. Such afflicted persons were present with St. Ambrose during the search; and, before the service for exorcism commenced, one of them gave the well-known signs of horror and distress which were customarily excited by the presence of what had been the tabernacle of divine grace.

The skeletons were raised and transported to the neighbouring church of Fausta. The next day, June 18th, on which they were to be conveyed to their destination, a vast concourse of people attended the procession. This was the moment chosen by Divine Providence to give, as it were, signal to his

Church, that, though years passed on, He was still what He had been from the beginning, a living and a faithful God, wonder-working as in the lifetime of the Apostles, and true to his word as spoken by his prophets unto a thousand generations. There was in Milan a man of middle age, well known in the place, by name Severus, who, having become blind, had given up his trade, and was now supported by charitable persons. Being told the cause of the shoutings in the streets, he persuaded his guide to lead him to the sacred relics. He came near; he touched the cloth which covered them; and he regained his sight immediately.

This relation deserves our special notice from its distinct miraculousness and its circumstantial character; but numerous other miracles are stated to have followed. Various diseases were cured and demoniacs dispossessed by the touch of the holy bodies or their envelopments.

Now for the evidence on which the whole matter rests. Our witnesses are three; St. Augustine, St. Ambrose, and Paulinus, the secretary of the latter, who after his death addressed a short memoir of his life to the former.

St. Augustine, in three separate passages in his works, two of which shall here be quoted, gives his testimony. First, in his City of God, in an enumeration of miracles which had taken place since the Apostles' time. He begins with that which he himself had witnessed in the city of St. Ambrose :—

"The miracle," he says, "which occurred at Milan, while I was there, when a blind man gained sight, was of a kind to come to the knowledge of many,

because the city is large, and the emperor was there at the time, and it was wrought with the witness of a vast multitude, who had come together to the bodies of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius; which, being at the time concealed and altogether unknown, were discovered on the revelation of a dream to Ambrose the bishop; upon which that blind man was released from his former darkness, and saw the day." —xxii. 8.

And next in his sermon upon the feast-day of the two martyrs:—

"We are celebrating, my brethren, the day on which, by Ambrose the bishop, that man of God, there was discovered, precious in the sight of the Lord, the death of His Saints; of which so great glory of the martyrs, then accruing, even I was a witness. I was there, I was at Milan, I know the miracles which were done, God attesting to the precious death of His Saints; that by those miracles henceforth, not in the Lord's sight only, but in the sight of men also, that death might be precious. A blind man, perfectly well known to the whole city, was restored to sight, and ran: he caused himself to be brought near, he returned without a guide. We have not yet heard of his death; perhaps he is still alive. In the very Church where their bodies are, he has vowed his whole life to religious service. We rejoiced in his restoration, we left him in service."

The third passage will be found in the ninth book of St. Austin's Confessions, and adds to the foregoing extracts the important fact that the miracle

was the cause of Justina's relinquishing her persecution of the Catholics.

Now let us proceed to the evidence of St. Ambrose, as contained in the sermons which he preached upon the occasion. In the former of the two, he speaks as follows of the miracles wrought by the relics:—

"Ye know, nay, ye have yourselves seen many cleansed from evil spirits, and numbers loosed from their infirmities, on laying their hands on the garment of the saints. Ye see renewed the miracles of the old time, when, through the advent of the Lord Jesus, a fuller grace poured itself upon the earth; ye see most men healed by the very shadow of the sacred bodies. How many were the napkins which passed to and fro! what anxiety for garments which had been laid upon the most holy relics, and made salutary by their very touch! It is an object with all to reach even to the extreme border, and he who reaches it will be made whole. Thanks be to Thee, Lord Jesus, for awakening for us at this time the spirts of the holy martyrs, when Thy Church needs greater guardianship. Let all understand the sort of champions I ask for,—those who may act as champions, not as assailants. And such have I gained for thee, my people, a benefit to all, a harm to none. Such defenders I solicit, such soldiers I possess, not the world's soldiers, but soldiers of Christ. I fear not that such will excite envy; because the higher in their guardianship, the less exceptionable is it also. Nay, for them even who envy me the martyrs, do I wish that they may be patrons. So let them come and see my body-guard; I own I

have such arms about me. 'These put their trust in chariots, and these in horses; but we will exalt ourselves in the name of the Lord our God.'

"Elissæus, as the course of Holy Scripture tells us, when surrounded by the Syrian army, said to his frightened servant, by way of calming him, 'There are more that are for us than are against us.' And to prove this, he begged that Gehazi's eyes might be opened; upon which the latter saw innumerable hosts of Angels present. We, though we cannot see them, yet are sensible of them. Our eyes were held as long as the bodies of the saints lay hid in their graves. The Lord has opened our eyes: we saw those aids by which we have often been defended. We had not the sight of these, yet we had the possession. And so, as though the Lord said to us in our alarm, 'Behold what martyrs I have given you!' in like manner our eyes are unclosed, and we see the glory of the Lord, which showed itself once in the passion of the martyrs, and now in their efficacy. We have got clear, my brethren, of no slight a load of shame; we had patrons, yet we knew it not. We have found this one thing, in which we have the advantage of our forefathers,—they lost the knowledge of these holy martyrs, and we have gained it.

"Bring the victorious victims to the spot where is Christ the sacrifice. But He upon the altar, who suffered for all; they under it, who were redeemed by His passion. I had intended this spot for myself, for it is fitting that where the priest had been used to offer, there he should repose; but I yield the right side to the sacred victims; that spot was due to the martyrs. Therefore let us bury the hallowed relics,

and introduce them into a fitting home; and celebrate the whole day with sincere devotion."

In his latter sermon, preached the following day, he pursues the subject:—

"This your celebration, they are jealous of who are wont to be; and being jealous of it, they hate the cause of it, and are extravagant enough to deny the merits of those martyrs, whose works the very devils confess. Nor is it wonderful; it commonly happens that the faithlessness of unbelievers is more extreme than the confession of the devil. For the devil said, 'Jesus, Son of the living God, why hast Thou come to torment us before the time?' And, whereas the Jews heard this, yet they were the very men to deny the Son of God. And now ye have heard the evil spirits crying out, and confessing to the martyrs, that they cannot bear their pains, and saying, 'Why are ye come to torment us so heavily?' And the Arians say, 'They are not martyrs, nor can they torment the devil, nor dispossess any one;' while the torments of the evil spirits are evidenced by their own voice, and the benefits of the martyrs by the recovery of the healed, and the proofs of the dispossessed.

"The Arians say, 'These are not real torments of evil spirits, but they are pretended and counterfeit.' I have heard of many things pretended, but no one ever could succeed in feigning himself a devil. How is it we see them in such distress when the hand is laid on them? What room is here for fraud? what suspicion of imposture?

"They deny that the blind received sight; but he

does not deny that he was cured. He says, 'I see, who afore saw not.' He says, 'I ceased to be blind,' and he evidences it by the fact. They deny the benefit, who cannot deny the fact. The man is well known; employed as he was, before his affliction, in a public trade, Severus his name, a butcher his business: he had given it up when this misfortune befell him. He refers to the testimony of men whose charities were supporting him; he summons them as evidence of his present visitation, who were witnesses and judges of his blindness. He cries out that, on his touching the hem of the martyrs' garment, which covered the relics, his sight was restored to him. We read in the Gospel, that when the Jews saw the cure of the blind man, they sought the testimony of the parents. Ask others, if you distrust me; ask persons unconnected with him, if you think that his parents would take a side. The obstinacy of these Arians is more hateful than that of the Jews. When the latter doubted, they inquired of the parents; these inquire secretly, deny openly, as giving credit to the fact, but denying the author."—*Ep.* 22.

We may corroborate the evidence of those two Fathers with that of Paulinus, who was secretary to St. Ambrose, and wrote his life, about A. D. 411.

"About the same time," he says, "the holy martyrs Protasius and Gervasius revealed themselves to God's priest. They lay in the Basilica, where, at present, are the bodies of the martyrs Nabor and Felix; while, however, the holy martyrs Nabor and Felix had crowds to visit them, as well the names

as the graves of the martyrs Protasius and Gervasius were unknown; so that all who wished to come to the rails which protected the graves of the martyrs Nabor and Felix, were used to walk on the graves of the others. But when the bodies of the holy martyrs were raised and placed on litters, thereupon many possessions of the devil were detected. Moreover, a blind man, by name Severus, who up to this day performs religious service in the Basilica called Ambrosian, into which the bodies of the martyrs have been translated, when he had touched the garment of the martyrs, forthwith received sight. Moreover, bodies possessed by unclean spirits were restored, and with all blessedness returned home. And by means of these benefits of the martyrs, while the faith of the Catholic Church made increase, by so much did Arian misbelief decline."—§ 14.

Now I want to know what reason is there for stumbling at the above narrative, which will not throw uncertainty upon the very fact that there was such a bishop as Ambrose, or such an empress as Justina, or such an heresy as the Arian, or any Church at all in Milan. Let us consider some of the circumstances under which it comes to us.

1. We have the concordant evidence of three distinct witnesses, of whom at least two were on the spot when the alleged miracles were wrought, one writing at the time, another some years afterwards in a distant country. And the third, writing after an interval of twenty-six years, agrees minutely with the evidence of the two former, not adding to the mira-

culous narrative, as in the manner of those who lose their delicate care for exactness in their admiration of the things and persons of whom they speak.

2. The miracle was wrought in public, in the case of a person well known, one who continued to live in the place where it was professedly wrought, and who, by devoting himself to the service of the martyrs who were the instruments of his cure, was a continual memorial of the mercy which he professed to have received, and challenged inquiry into it, and refutation if that were possible.

3. Ambrose, one of our informants, publicly appealed, at the time when the occurrence took place, to the general belief, claimed it for the miracle, and that in a sermon which is still extant.

4. He made his statement in the presence of bitter and most powerful enemies, who were much concerned, and very able to expose the fraud if there was one; who did, as might be expected, deny the hand of God in the matter; but who, for all that appears, did nothing but deny what they could not consistently confess, without ceasing to be what they were.

5. A great and practical impression was made upon the popular mind in consequence of the alleged miracles: or, in the words of an historian whose profession it is to disbelieve them, "Their effect on the minds of the people was rapid and irresistible; and the feeble sovereign of Italy found himself unable to contend with the favourite of heaven [1]."

6. And so powerfully did all this press upon the

[1] Gibbon's Hist. ch. 27

court, that, as the last words of this extract intimate, the persecution was given up, and the Catholics left in quiet possession of the churches.

On the whole, then, are we not in the following dilemma :—If the miracle did not take place, then St. Ambrose and St. Augustine, men of name, said they had ascertained a fact which they did not ascertain, and said it in the face of enemies, with an appeal to a whole city, and that continued during a quarter of a century. What instrument of refutation shall we devise against a case like this, neither so violently *à priori* as to supersede the Apostles' testimony, nor so fastidious of evidence as to imperil Tacitus or Cæsar? On the other hand, if the miracle did take place, a certain measure of authority, more or less, surely must thereby attach to St. Ambrose,—to his doctrine and his life, to his ecclesiastical principles and proceedings, to the Church itself of the fourth century, of which he is one main pillar. The miracle gives a certain sanction to three things at once, to the Catholic doctrine of the Trinity, to the Church's resistance of the civil power, and to the commemoration of saints and martyrs.

Which alternative shall the Protestant accept? shall we retreat, or shall we advance? shall we relapse into scepticism upon all subjects, or sacrifice our deep-rooted prejudices? shall we give up our knowledge of times past altogether, or endure to gain a knowledge which we think we have already,—the knowledge of divine truth?

CHAPTER IV.

THE PENITENCE OF THEODOSIUS.

"Be wise now, therefore, O ye kings; be learned, ye that are judges of the earth. Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice unto Him with reverence. Kiss the Son, lest He be angry, and so ye perish from the right way."

It is very satisfactory to find that the Christian fortitude of St. Ambrose was not thrown away upon Valentinian. This young prince, who died prematurely, nay, before his baptism, gave signs during several of his last years, of a very altered state of mind towards the Church and her vigorous champion. Such was the fruit of braving the frown of royalty in a good cause. Perhaps St. Ambrose would not have done as much by what men call more prudent conduct; by temporizing and conceding. There is no sort of doubt, that had the scene been laid in England in the nineteenth century, not to speak in very generosity of the sixteenth, courtliness would have been the order of the day. The Basilica would have been surrendered to the heretics; yet I fear without any such change of heart in consequence in prince or prime minister, by a timid policy on the part of the Church, as Valentinian underwent on meeting with resistance. Certainly we have not made great men more religious by letting them have their own way. As for Valentinian, he was cut off under very sad yet

interesting circumstances. Being engaged in Gaul in an attempt to reduce the power of Arbogastes, the Frank, who was secretly conspiring against him, he wrote to St. Ambrose to come to him, both to assist him in his negotiations and to baptize him. Before Ambrose could arrive, Arbogastes had murdered the emperor.

But, leaving Valentinian, let us turn to the consideration of a still more striking and salutary instance of episcopal vigour, exerted in the case of a more powerful emperor; I mean the conduct of St. Ambrose towards Theodosius, on occasion of the massacre at Thessalonica. This is the most instructive passage in his history; nay, perhaps in the history of the whole Church; for what sight can be more edifying to the Christian, or more impressive to the world at large, than that of a bishop conscientiously and calmly rebuking a great warrior, and that warrior and sovereign humbly confessing and repenting of his sin?

The circumstances which led to this memorable display of Apostolical severity were as follows:— Theodosius was of a choleric temper, which hurried him on to visit, with the power of an emperor, insults which every one, prince and subject, naturally feels. In the year 390, a tumult took place in Thessalonica on some supposed grievance, such as commonly excites a populace, which ended in the murder of the commander of the imperial forces, who had given the offence, and other officers. The first burst of the emperor's indignation was overcome by the interposition of the clergy, particularly Ambrose; and he promised to pardon the Thessalonians. But

his minister considered the outrage too great to be passed over with safety to the empire: a similar tumult had lately been pardoned at Antioch; and, in the present instance, there had been no tyranny or impolitic rigour on the part of the unfortunate general who had been the victim of the insurrection. So far, their judgment was doubtless right; but the sentence, which they succeeded in recommending to their sovereign, was so shocking, as sufficiently to account for the previous intercession of the Church in behalf of the offenders. The purpose of vengeance was kept secret; the Thessalonians were invited to the circus, which was silently surrounded by soldiery; and, when they expected the races to commence, a signal was given, and a promiscuous massacre followed. It continued for three hours; and 7000, without discrimination of age or sex, are said to have been slaughtered. Theodosius had revoked the cruel order soon after it was given, but too late to prevent its execution.

These events took place in the early spring; and soon afterwards Theodosius returned to Milan. Ambrose had been in the custom of attending the court on its arrival: but now he retired into the country two or three days beforehand. Thence he despatched the following letter to the emperor, who seems to have expressed surprise at his absence:—

"Augustissimo Imperatori THEODOSIO, AMBROSIUS episcopus.

"I bear an affectionate memory of your former friendship towards me, and of your great condescension in so often granting favours to others at my instance.

Accordingly, it is not ingratitude that leads me to shun a presence which hitherto has ever been most coveted by me. I will briefly explain to you my reasons for doing so.

"I found that I was forbidden, I alone of your whole court, the natural right of hearing what went on about me, with a view of depriving me of the privilege of speaking. I know you have not unfrequently been displeased at my knowledge of measures which were determined on in your council. Thus I am deprived of this liberty, though the Lord Jesus says, that 'there is nothing hid, but shall be made manifest.' However, I acquiesced in the imperial will with all dutifulness; and I took measures for obviating your displeasure, by providing that no news about the imperial statutes should be brought me.

"What else then could I do? Not hear? as if my ears could be closed with the wax which ancient fables speak of. Say what I heard? I could not without hazarding by my words what I feared in your counsels,—some act of blood. Be silent? This would be most wretched of all—to have one's conscience bound and one's lips closed. Is it not written, 'If God's minister fail to speak to the sinner, the latter shall die in his sin; but he shall answer for not speaking?'

"Suffer me, gracious emperor. You have zeal for the faith, I own it; and the fear of God, I confess it; but you have an impetuosity of nature at offenders, which a counsellor may either soothe into compassion, or stimulate till self-government is almost lost. O that those about you were as backward in rousing as

they are in appeasing it! I would gladly leave it altogether to your own management; since you can recover yourself, and get the better of this violence of nature by an effort to be merciful.

"I thought it best to leave your own reflections to overcome it, instead of running the risk of increasing it by some public interposition. So I resolved rather to be wanting in my duty towards my office, than in my deference towards my sovereign; and that the world should think me deficient in episcopal vigour rather than that you should accuse my loyalty, so that repressing your anger, you might have free opportunity for determining your course of action. I excused my attendance on the plea of my health, which indeed was severely tried, and which men of merciful minds alone could improve; yet I would rather have died than have been behindhand by a day or two in presenting myself on your arrival. But I knew not what to do.

"A deed has been perpetrated in Thessalonica, which has no parallel in history; which I in vain attempted to prevent; yes, which I protested would be most atrocious, in the frequent expostulations I addressed to you beforehand; nor could I extenuate a deed which you, by your own attempt to recall it, have confessed to be heinous. When the news came, I was engaged in a synod, held on the arrival of the Gallic bishops. All assembled deplored it, none viewed it leniently; your friendship with Ambrose weighed nothing in your favour. Surely the odium of the crime would fall even more heavily on me, should no reconciliation to Almighty God be required of you.

"O emperor, why should you feel shame to act as David acted,—he was a prophet as well as a king, and a forefather of Christ according to the flesh? A parable was set before him; and, when he found that by it he himself was condemned, he said, 'I have sinned before the Lord.' Take it not ill, then, O emperor, if the same words are used towards you as the prophet used to David—'Thou art the man.' For if you give due attention to them, and answer, 'I have sinned against the Lord,' if you utter that royal and prophetic strain, 'O come, let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker,' then it will be said to you, 'Since it repenteth thee, the Lord putteth away thy sin: thou shalt not die.'

"I have written this, not to overpower you, but to induce you, by a royal example, to put away this sin from your kingdom,—that is,—by humbling your soul to God. You are a man; temptation has come upon you: get the better of it. Tears and penitence are the only remedy for sin, neither angel nor archangel can take it away; the Lord Himself, who alone can say, 'I am with you always,' even He pardons not except upon penitence.

"I entreat, I demand, I exhort, I admonish; for it sorrows me to think that one, who was a pattern of singular mercy, who was remarkable for clemency, and rescued even individual culprits from their difficulties, should now feel no remorse at the death of a guiltless multitude. Successful as you have been in battle, and great in other respects, yet it was mercy which crowned all your doings. The devil has envied your chief excellence. Overcome him

while you have the means. Add not one sin to another by conduct from which too many suffer.

"For my part, debtor as I am to your clemency in all other things, grateful as I must ever be to it, greater as I have ever thought it than that of all other emperors but one, and unsuspicious though I am as yet of contumacy on your part, still I have apprehension; I dare not offer sacrifice if you resolve to attend. Is that lawful when many innocents have bled, which is not lawful in a solitary murder? I trow not.

"O emperor, I much regret that, in the beginning of this business, I left it to the risk of your temper instead of moving in it myself. When I consider that your pardon is suddenly given, suddenly recalled, as often before it would appear that you have been overtaken, and I have not averted what it was not right perhaps to anticipate. But thanks be to God, who is pleased to chastise His poor servants lest He lose them altogether. This is my lot in common with the prophets; be it yours in common with the saints.

"Do not I love the father of Gratian more even than my own eyes? Your other innocent children seem to intercede for you also. I mention that beloved youth, not to exclude, but to represent the rest. You have my love, my affection, my prayers. If you have confidence in me, obey me, and allow what I say: if not, make allowance for what I do, in that I prefer God to my sovereign. Gracious emperor, may you and your dear children enjoy everlasting peace."—*Ep.* 51.

This letter, which is written rather with the familiarity and affection of a friend than with the measured precision of an ecclesiastical censure, is thus summarily treated by the historian Gibbon :— "His epistle is a miserable rhapsody on a noble subject. Ambrose could act better than he could write. His compositions are destitute of taste or genius,"—a remark which may be taken as one instance out of many of obliquity of mind or rapidity of judgment in that able writer. In spite of his apparent candour, few persons have been such genuine haters of Christianity and the Church ; and Ambrose was one of those who most especially merited his disgust, by the intrepidity with which he thrust the claims of sacred truth upon the world,—claims, which unbelievers would fain shut up in the library of the theologian, or within the limits of consecrated ground.

There is nothing to show how Theodosius bore the remonstrance of Ambrose on the first receipt of it. We next hear of him as attempting to attend divine service at Milan, where Ambrose officiated, having by this time returned to the city. He was met at the entrance by the man of God, who thus addressed him :—

"Surely your majesty is not aware of the heinousness of the slaughter which has taken place. Passion is over ; yet reason does not yet estimate the crime. Perchance kingly rule is an obstacle to repentance, and sovereignty prevents reflection. Yet it is as well for a man to feel his perishable nature, and remem-

ber that dust is his beginning and his end, in spite of that gorgeous purple which may beguile the heart, but cannot reverse the feebleness of the frame it covers. Your subjects, emperor, are your fellow-creatures; I should rather say, your fellow-servants, —servants of one universal Lord and King, the Maker of the universe. Dare you, then, look upon His shrine, who is Lord of low as well as high?—dare you tread His holy pavement?—dare you stretch forth hands, which are yet reeking with the blood of innocent victims?—dare you receive in them the most holy body of your Lord?—dare you taste His precious blood with lips which have spoken their rage in an unjust slaughter? Go hence; add not a new offence to what is past; submit to the bond which is placed upon you according to the will of the Most High. Take it as medicine to restore your soul."

Theodosius yielded to the voice of the Church;—he retired home, where he remained suspended from Christian communion for eight months.

Christmas was now come, and the emperor made a second attempt to join in public worship, considering doubtless that he had already suffered a sufficient penance for his crime. His minister, Ruffinus, who had been the adviser of the massacre, had found him in tears; and on inquiring the cause of his grief, had been reminded of his state of separation from the Church. "Servants and beggars," said the emperor, "may enter freely to join in prayer; but against me the gates of heaven are shut; for well I know what the Lord has so clearly said, 'Whom ye bind shall be bound in heaven.'" Ruffinus per-

suaded him to let him go to Ambrose; and Theodosius, impatient at his delay, set out towards the church before his return. When he had got as far as the forum, he was met by his minister, who reported to him the ill success of his mission; on which, with a noble resolution, he declared he would proceed onwards, and undergo the shame which he had deserved.

The bishop's apartments, as has already been noticed, were contained within a range of buildings, of which the Basilica formed a part; and thither, not to the Basilica, Theodosius now betook himself. In the interview which followed, he consented to undergo a public penance; and promised to pass a law that thirty days should, in future, intervene between sentence and execution in all cases of death and confiscation. On these terms he reconciled himself to the Church.

His first appearance in public worship after his absolution, had itself the character of a penance. With all signs of vehement grief, he prostrated himself upon the pavement, and applied the words of the Psalmist to his own situation,—"My soul cleaveth unto the dust: quicken Thou me, according to Thy word." It so happened, when the time came for presenting the oblation at the altar, instead of retiring from the chancel, he remained, through forgetfulness, within the rails, according to the custom of the Eastern Church, there to receive the sacrament. Ambrose ventured not to relax one tittle of the stern discipline of the Latins, even to reward a penitent monarch. He sent his archdeacon to signify to him that none but ordained persons were

allowed to remain in the sanctuary; on which the emperor promptly retired. Some writers, however, consider that this took place on his first arrival at Milan from the East.

Theodoret adds, that, on his return to Constantinople, one day after making his offering at the altar as usual, he retired, as he had learned from Ambrose, without the rails, and was recalled by the Patriarch Nectarius. Upon this he observed, "Of all whom I have met, Ambrose is the only BISHOP."

Perhaps an unlearned reader might imagine Theodosius some weak prince, such as might be expected in the latter days of Rome, the offspring and the instrument of her degeneracy. For such an one I will quote the unsuspicious evidence of that same historian to whom I have already referred:—

"The wisdom of his laws, and the success of his arms, rendered his administration respectable in the eyes both of his subjects and of his enemies. He loved and practised the virtues of domestic life, which seldom hold their residence in the palaces of kings. Theodosius was chaste and temperate; he enjoyed, without excess, the sensual and social pleasures of the table; and the warmth of his amorous passions was never diverted from their lawful objects. The proud titles of imperial greatness were adorned by the tender names of a faithful husband, an indulgent father. His uncle was raised, by his affectionate esteem, to the rank of a second parent. Theodosius embraced, as his own, the children of his brother and sister; and the expressions of his regard were extended to the most distant and obscure branches of his numerous kindred. His familiar

friends were judiciously selected from among those persons who, in the intercourse of private life, had appeared before his eyes without a mask; the consciousness of personal and superior merit enabled him to despise the accidental distinction of the purple; and he proved, by his conduct, that he had forgotten all the injuries, while he most gratefully remembered all the favours and services, which he had received before he ascended the throne of the Roman empire. The serious or lively tone of his conversation was adapted to the age, the rank, or the character of his subjects whom he admitted into his society; and the affability of his manners displayed the image of his mind. Theodosius respected the simplicity of the good and virtuous; every art, every talent of an useful, or even of an innocent nature, was rewarded by his judicious liberality; and, except the heretics, whom he persecuted with implacable hatred, the diffusive circle of his benevolence was circumscribed only by the limits of the human race. The government of a mighty empire may assuredly suffice to occupy the time and abilities of a mortal: yet the diligent prince, without aspiring to the unsuitable reputation of profound learning, always reserved some moments of his leisure for the instructive amusement of reading. History, which enlarged his experience, was his favourite study . . . . His disinterested opinion of past events was usefully applied as the rule of his own actions; and Theodosius has deserved the singular commendation, that his virtues always seemed to expand with his fortune; the season of his prosperity was that of his moderation; and his clemency

appeared the most conspicuous after the danger and success of the civil war. But the emperor showed himself much more attentive to relieve the innocent than to chastise the guilty. The oppressed subjects of the West, who would have deemed themselves happy in the restoration of their lands, were astonished to receive a sum of money equivalent to their losses; and the liberality of the conqueror supported the aged mother, and educated the orphan daughter of Maximus. A character thus accomplished might almost excuse the extravagant supposition of the orator Pacatus,—that, if the elder Brutus could be permitted to revisit the earth, the stern republican would abjure, at the feet of Theodosius, his hatred of kings; and ingenuously confess, that such a monarch was the most faithful guardian of the happiness and dignity of the Roman people."

Such was the Great Theodosius;—such in his virtues, in his offence, and in his penitence.

CHAPTER V.

BASIL THE GREAT.

"Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear or whether they will forbear; for they are most rebellious.

As Athanasius was the great champion of catholic truth, during the incursions of Arianism upon it, so were Basil and Ambrose, in the East and in the West, the chief instruments in the hands of Providence for repairing and strengthening the bulwarks of the Church, when the fury of the inroad was over. Both had to contend with an Arian sovereign; and both gained their victory by the same means, their popularity with the laity and the vigour of their discipline. From Milan, which had been in heretical possession for twenty years, "round about unto Illyricum," Ambrose preached in the west the gospel of Christ. Basil, whose cares extended from Illyricum down to Egypt [1], was called to a still more arduous post. These countries had from the first been over-run by the Arians, and were, by the middle of the fourth century, in a deplorable state of religious ignorance. Asia Minor was the especial scene of Basil's labours,

[1] Vide *Ep.* 70.

first as priest, then as bishop of the church of Cæsarea and Exarch of Cappadocia, from A.D. 358 to A.D. 379.

At the former of these dates, Dianius was in possession of the see. He seems to have baptized Basil, who speaks warmly in his praise, expressing the affection and respect he felt for him, and the pleasure he took in his society; and describing him as a man remarkable for his virtue, as frank, generous, and venerable, while he was amiable and agreeable in his manners. However, he fell in with the fashion of the age, and had for nearly twenty years sided with the court faction against Athanasius and his holy cause. Accordingly he signed without scruple the formulary of the council of Ariminum, which was presented to him A. D. 360, and in which the orthodox test of the Homoüsion being given up, the catholic doctrine was evaded under the pretence of expressing it only in terms of Scripture. Basil felt bitterly this weakness, to give it its mildest name, on the part of one he so much loved; and though he did not consider that there was a call on him for any public protest, he ceased to hold intercourse with him, nor did he come near him till two years afterwards, when Dianius sent for him to attend his death-bed, and professed solemnly his adherence to the faith of Nicea.

Eusebius, the successor of Dianius, was a bishop of orthodox views, but had little of the theological knowledge or force of character necessary for coping with the formidable heresy with which the church was assailed. For some reason or other, perhaps from a feeling of jealousy, he manifested a coldness towards the rising theologian, who is to be the sub-

ject of this chapter; and Basil, who was now a priest, unwilling to excite the people, or create parties in the Church, retired from the metropolitan city.

His retreat, both now and in the lifetime of Dianius, was in Pontus, where he had founded a number of monasteries, over one of which he presided. He had retired thither first about A.D. 355, the year in which St. Anthony died, for the purposes of study and self-discipline; and to a mind ardent, and sensitive, such as his, nothing was more suitable than such a temporary retreat from the turbulence of ecclesiastical politics. Nor was his life at this time one of inaction or solitude. On occasion of a famine in the neighbouring town and country, he converted his lands into money, to supply the wants of the people; taking upon himself particularly the charge of their children, besides relieving all who applied to him, among whom the Jews are mentioned as receiving a share in his liberality. His monasteries became, in a short time, schools of that holy teaching which had been almost banished from the sees of Asia; and it is said that he was in the practice of making a circuit of the neighbouring towns, from time to time, to preach to them the Nicene doctrine. This indeed was a benefit which was not unfrequently rendered to the Church, in that hour of apostacy, by these ascetics, and for which we who now live have reason to be grateful to them.

"The reason," says Sozomen, who, however, is somewhat too fond of them, "why the doctrines" of Eunomius and Apollinaris "had not any extensive success, in addition to the causes above mentioned, is, that the Solitaries of the day took part against

them. For those of Syria and Cappadocia, and the neighbouring districts, firmly adhered to the creed of Nicæa. At one time, the oriental provinces, from Cilicia to Phœnicia, were near becoming Apollinarian, while those from Cilicia and the Taurus to the Hellespont and Constantinople were exposed to the heresy of Eunomius; each heresiarch having success in his own neighbourhood. And then the history of Arianism was acted over again; for the populace in those parts had that reverence for the characters and the works of the Solitaries, as to trust their doctrine as orthodox; and they shrank from those who held otherwise, as impure, for their adulterate doctrine; just as the Egyptians followed the Solitaries of Egypt and opposed the Arians."—*Hist.* vi. 27.

Basil had lived in his second retirement about three years, when the attack of the Arians upon the Church of Cæsarea, under the emperor Valens, made his loss felt, and his friend, Gregory of Nazianzus, successfully interposed his mediation between him and Eusebius. Gregory's letters are extant, and I here present them to the reader.

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"This is a time for good counsel and fortitude. We must surpass others in courage, nor suffer that all our past toil and labour should be undone in a moment. Why do I write thus? Because our most gracious bishop (for such we ought to think and call Eusebius henceforth) has most amicable and kind feelings towards us, and like steel in the fire, is softened by time. I even expect that you will receive

a communication from him, with pleasant words, and a summons, as he himself hinted to me, and many of his confidential friends assure me. Let us then anticipate his advances, either by our presence or by writing, or, what would be better still, by first writing and then making our appearance, lest we be hereafter worsted with disgrace, when we might have conquered by a worsting which was honourable and dignified; which, indeed, most men expect of us. Come, then, according to my entreaty, both on this account, and for the times' sake. In truth, the heretical faction is trampling the Church under foot; some of them are already among us and are at work; others, it is said, will follow soon. Surely there is danger of their sweeping away the word of truth, unless the spirit of our Bezaleel speedily awake, that cunning master-builder of argument and doctrine. If you wish me to be present and to assist in this business, or to be the companion of your journey, I am at your service." *Ep.* 19.

It is impossible not to be struck with Gregory's delicacy in this letter, in which he speaks as if he himself were estranged from Eusebius, as well as Basil, though he stood at the time high in his favour. His next letter is to the bishop himself, whose intentions he anticipates with equal delicacy.

GREGORY TO EUSEBIUS, BISHOP OF CÆSAREA.

"I know I am addressing one who hates insincerity himself, and is especially keen in detecting it in another, though cloked in ever so artful and subtle a disguise; and indeed, I may say, if you will par-

don the impertinence, I am myself averse to it, both by natural disposition and from Christian education. So I write what is uppermost on my mind, and beg you to excuse my freedom. Indeed it would be an injury to me to restrain me and bid me keep my pain to myself, as a sore festering in my heart. Proud as I am of your notice, (for I am a man, as some one says before me,) and of your invitations to religious consultations and meetings, yet I cannot bear your holiness's past and present slight of my most honoured brother Basil, whom I selected from the first and still possess as my friend, to live with me and study with me, and search with me into the deepest wisdom. I have no need to be dissatisfied with the opinion I have formed of him, and if I do not say more to his praise, it is lest, in enlarging on his admirable qualities, I should seem to be praising myself. Now, your favour towards me, and discountenance of him, is as if a man should stroke one's head with one hand, and with the other strike one's cheek; or decorate a house with paintings and beautify the outside, while he was undermining its foundations. If there is any thing you will grant me, let it be this; and I trust you will, for really it is equitable. He will certainly defer to you, if you do but pay a reasonable deference to him. For myself, I shall come after him as shadows follow bodies, being small, and a lover of quiet. Miserable indeed should we be, if while we were desirous of wisdom in other matters, and of choosing the better part, we yet thought little of that grace, which is the end of all our doctrine—charity; especially in the case of one who is our bishop, and so eminent,

as we well know, in life, in doctrine, and in the government of his diocese; for the truth must be spoken, whatever be our private feelings." *Ep.* 20.

Great men love to be courted, and little men must not mind rebuffs. Gregory did not succeed in this first attempt with Eusebius, who seems to have been offended at his freedom; and he himself was disgusted in turn, at the Bishop's stiffness. However, the danger of the Church was too great to allow of the continuance of such feelings on either side, and Gregory had, in a little while, the satisfaction of seeing Basil at Cæsarea.

The vigorous talents of Basil soon put to rights the disorders and variances which had been the scandal of the Church of Cæsarea; and with the assistance of Gregory, he completely vanquished the Eunomian disputants, from whose subtlety the peace of the Church had principally suffered. What was of more consequence to its permanent welfare, he was successful in obliterating all the suspicions his bishop had entertained of him, and at length gained such influence over him, that he had really the government of the see in his own hands. This was the more desirable as Eusebius had not been regularly educated for the ministerial office, but had been called by the caprice of the people to fill the episcopal chair. At length (A.D. 370) Eusebius died; and Basil, as might be expected, though not without a strong opposition, was elected to supply his place. This opposition was excited by the governing powers of the country, who might naturally be supposed to fear a man of Basil's commanding character, and who were joined

by some of the bishops of the exarchate, and by an irreligious party in the city itself.

He had not been long in his see when he was brought into open collision with the civil power. Valens made a progress through the east, from Constantinople to Antioch, in A. D. 371, 372, with the determination of deposing the catholic bishops in the countries which he traversed; and about the end of the former year he came to Cæsarea. There he called before him the prefect Modestus, as he had done in the other cities, and bade him propose to Basil the alternative of communicating with the Arians, or losing his see. Modestus conveyed his pleasure to the bishop, and set before him the arguments which had been already found successful with the inferior sort of men, that it was foolish to resist the times, and to trouble the Church about questions of inconsiderable importance; and he promised him the prince's favour for him and his friends, if he complied. Failing by soft language, he adopted a higher tone. Gregory has preserved the dialogue which passed between them.

"What is the meaning of this, you Basil, (said the prefect, not deigning to style him bishop,) that you stand out against so great a prince, and are self-willed when others yield?

"BASIL. What would you: and what is my extravagance? I have not yet learned it.

"MODESTUS. Your not worshipping after the emperor's manner, when the rest of your party have given way and been overcome.

"BASIL. I have a Sovereign whose will is otherwise, nor can I bring myself to worship any creature, —I a creature of God, and commanded to be a god.

"MODESTUS. For whom do you take me?

"BASIL. For a thing of nought, while such are your commands.

"MODESTUS. Is it, then, a mere nothing for one like you to have rank like myself, and to have my fellowship?

"BASIL. You are prefect, and in noble place: I own it. Yet God's majesty is greater; and it is much for me to have your fellowship, for we are both God's creatures. But it is as great to be fellow to any other of my flock, for Christianity lies not in distinction of persons, but in faith.

"The prefect was angered at this, and rose from his chair, and abruptly asked Basil if he did not fear his power.

"BASIL. Fear what consequences? what sufferings?

"MODESTUS. One of those many pains a prefect can inflict.

"BASIL. Let me know them.

"MODESTUS. Confiscation, exile, tortures, death.

"BASIL. Think of some other threat. These have no influence upon me. He runs no risk of confiscation who has nothing to lose, except these mean garments and a few books. Nor does he care for exile, who is not circumscribed by place, who makes it not a home where he now dwells, but everywhere a home whithersoever he be cast, or rather everywhere God's home, whose pilgrim he is and wanderer. Nor can tortures harm a frame so frail as to break under the

first blow. You could but strike once, and death would be gain. It would but send me the sooner to Him for whom I live and labour, nay, am dead rather than live, to whom I have long been journeying.

"Modestus. No one yet ever spoke to Modestus with such freedom.

"Basil. Peradventure Modestus never yet fell in with a bishop; or surely in a like trial you would have heard like language. O Prefect, in other things we are gentle, and more humble than all men living, for such is the commandment; so as not to raise our brow, I say not against 'so great a prince,' but even against one of least account. But when God's honour is at stake, we think of nothing else, looking simply to Him. Fire and the sword, beasts of prey, irons to rend the flesh, are an indulgence rather than a terror to a Christian. Therefore insult, threaten, do your worst, make the most of your power. Let the emperor be informed of my purpose. Me you gain not, you persuade not, to an impious creed, by menaces even more frightful."—*Greg.* Orat. 20, p. 349.

Modestus parted with him with the respect which firmness necessarily inspires in those who witness it; and, going to the emperor, repeated the failure of his attempt. A second conversation between the bishop and the ministers of the court took place in the presence, as some suppose, of Valens himself, who had generosity enough to admire his high spirit, and to dismiss him without punishment. Indeed, his admiration of Basil occasioned a fresh trial of the archbishop's constancy, more distressing, perhaps, than any which he had hitherto undergone. On

the feast of the Epiphany, he attended the church where Basil officiated, with all his court, and heard his sermon. Afterwards followed the ceremony of bringing oblations to the altar, in commemoration of the offerings of the Magi. Valens is said to have been much affected by the chants which accompanied the service, and the order which reigned through the congregation, and almost to have fainted away. At length he made an effort to approach the holy table to offer the oblation; but none of the ministers of the church presenting himself to receive it from him, his limbs again gave way, and it was only by the assistance of one of them that he was kept from falling.

It cannot be too much insisted on that the Church gains the respect of the great, not by courting them, but by treating them as her children. It would be a satisfaction, however, to be able to indulge a hope that the good feelings of the emperor were more than the excitement of the moment, but his persevering persecution of the Catholics for years afterwards forbids the favourable supposition. Yet it was not once only that he trembled before the majestic presence of the exarch of Cæsarea, who ensured for his own provinces an immunity, in great measure, of the sufferings with which the Catholics elsewhere were visited, and exerted an influence over him so far, as to gain some of the best of the imperial lands in the neighbourhood, for the endowment of an hospital which he had founded for lepers.

CHAPTER VI.

TRIALS OF BASIL.

"As a servant earnestly desireth the shadow, and as an hireling looketh for the reward of his work, so am I made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights are appointed to me."

On various occasions, before his episcopate, Basil had shown his care for the poor and afflicted. His sale of his lands to alleviate the miseries of a famine, has already been mentioned: he raised funds for erecting and endowing a hospital near Cæsarea, principally for lepers, whom he treated with a studious familiarity in order to remove the horror at their persons which their malady commonly excited. The buildings also contained accommodation for travellers, and were so extensive as to go by the name of the "New Town." Institutions such as these have been ever felt as especially characteristic of Christianity, and St. Basil seems to have succeeded in introducing them throughout his province.

If personal suffering be the providential means of sympathising in the sufferings of others, Basil had abundant opportunities of learning this Christian grace. From his multiplied trials he may be called the Jeremiah or Job of the fourth century, though occupying the honoured place of a ruler in the

Church at a time when heathen violence was over. He had a very sickly constitution, to which he added the rigour of an ascetic life. He was surrounded by jealousies and dissensions at home; he was accused of heterodoxy in the world; he was insulted and roughly treated by great men; and he laboured, apparently without fruit, in the endeavour to restore unity and stability to the Catholic Church. If temporal afflictions work out for the saints "an exceeding weight of glory," who is higher in the kingdom of heaven than Basil?

I will first give some specimens of his private trials, reserving for the present those which more especially belong to him as bishop. As to his austerities, we know something of them from his own picture what a monk's life should be, and from Gregory's description of them. In a letter to the latter, (*Ep.* 2.) Basil limits the food of his recluses to bread, water, herbs, and but one meal a day, and allows of sleep only till midnight, when they were to rise for prayer. And he says to the emperor Julian, "Cookery with us is idle; no knife is familiar with blood; our daintiest meal is vegetables with coarsest bread and vapid wine." *Ep.* 41. Gregory, in like manner, when expecting a visit from Basil, writes to Amphilochius to send him some fine pot-herbs, if he did not wish to find Basil hungry and cross." *Ep.* 12. And in his account of his friend, after his death, he says, that "he had but one inner and outer garment; his bed was the ground; little sleep, no bath; his food bread and salt, his drink the running stream." *Orat.* 20. He slept in a hair-shirt, or other rough garment; the sun was his fire; and he braved the severest frosts.

Even when bishop he was supported by the continual charity of his friends. He kept nothing.

His constitution was naturally weak, or rather unhealthy. What his principal malady was, is told us in the following passage of his history, which sets before us another kind of trial, of which one specimen has already come before us.—A widow of rank being importuned with a proposal of marriage from a powerful quarter, fled for refuge to the altar. St. Basil received her. This brought him into trouble with the sub-prefect of Pontus, who summoned him. When he had presented himself, the magistrate gave orders to pull off his outer garment. His inner garment, which remained, did not conceal his emaciated body. The brutal persecutor threatened to tear out his liver. Basil smiled and answered, "Thanks for your intention: where it is at present, it has been no slight annoyance."

On one occasion he gives the following account of his maladies to Eusebius, Bishop of Samosata.

"What was my state of mind, think you, when I received your piety's letter? When I thought of the feelings which its language expressed, I was eager to fly straight to Syria; but when I thought of the bodily illness, under which I lay bound, I saw myself unequal, not only to flying, but to turning even on my bed. This is the fiftieth day of my illness, on which our beloved and excellent brother and deacon Elpidius has arrived. I am much reduced by the fever, which, failing what it might feed on, lingers in this dry flesh as in an expiring wick, and so has brought on a wasting and tedious illness.

Next, my old plague, the liver, coming upon it, has kept me from taking nourishment, prevented sleep, and held me on the confines of life and death, granting just life enough to feel its inflictions. In consequence I have had recourse to the hot springs, and have availed myself of aid from medical men."—*Ep.* 138.

The fever here mentioned seems to have been an epidemic, and so far unusual; but his ordinary state of health will be understood from the following letter, written to the same friend in the beginning of his illness, in which he describes the fever as almost a change for the better.

"In what state the good Isaaces has found me, he himself will best explain to you; though his tongue cannot be tragic enough to describe my sufferings, so great was my illness. However, any one who knows me ever so little, will be able to conjecture what it was. For if when I am called well, I am weaker even than persons who are given over, you may fancy what I was when thus ill. Yet since disease is my natural state, it would follow (let a fever have its jest) that in this change of habit, my health became especially flourishing. But it is the scourge of the Lord which goes on increasing my pain according to my deserts; therefore, I have received illness upon illness, so that now even a child may see that this shell of mine must for certain fail, unless perchance God's mercy, vouchsafing to me, in His long-suffering, time for repentance, now, as often before, extricate me from evils beyond human cure. This shall be, as it is pleasing to Him and good for myself."—*Ep.* 136.

Eusebius seems to have been especially the confidant of his bodily sufferings. Five years before, he writes to him a similar description in answer to a similar call. "When," he says, "by God's grace and the aid of your prayers, I seemed to be somewhat recovering from my illness and rallied my strength, then the winter came upon me, keeping me in-doors and confining me where I was. It was, indeed, much milder than usual, yet enough to prevent, not only my travelling during it, but even my putting out my head even a little from my room." *Ep.* 27. And nine years later than this, and three years before his death, he says, that for a time "all remaining hope of life had left him." "I cannot number," he adds "the various affections which have befallen me, my weakness, the violence of the fever, and the bad state of my constitution." *Ep.* 198. One especial effect of his complaints was to hinder his travelling, which, as his presence was continually needed, accounts for his frequently insisting on them. To Amphilochius, bishop of Iconium, he writes in the same year: "The remains of my illness are sufficient to keep me from the least motion. I went in a carriage as far as the Martyrs, and had very nearly a relapse; so I am obliged to beg you to excuse me. If the matter could be put off for a few days, then, by God's grace, I will be with you, and share your counsels." *Ep.* 202. To a friend, whom at an earlier date he was urging to visit him in his retreat, he says, "You must not answer with Diogenes to Alexander, It is no further from you to me, than from me to you. For my sickness almost makes me like a plant, confined ever to one

spot; besides, to live in concealment I account among the first of goods." *Ep.* 9. He elsewhere speaks of his state of health as "bodily weakness, natural to him from childhood to age, and chastening him according to the just judgment of an Allwise Governor." *Ep.* 203. At forty-five he calls himself an old man; and by the next year he had lost his teeth. He died at the age of fifty. Yet, in spite of his infirmities, he does not seem at all to have spared himself the fatigue of travelling. He writes to Meletius, bishop of Antioch, "Many other journeys from my own country have engaged me. I crossed over to Pisidia, to arrange, in conjunction with the bishops there, the affairs of our Isaurian brethren. The journey to Pontus followed, Eustathius having put Dazimon in sufficient confusion, and persuaded many there to separate from my church. I went as far as my brother Peter's cottage near Neocæsarea. On my return, when I was very ill from the rains and despondency, letters arrived forthwith from the East," &c.—*Ep.* 216.

Something of St. Basil's tone of mind is seen in the above extracts; it will be seen more fully in three letters of expostulation to friends, written under very different circumstances.

The first is a familiar letter to one who, having congratulated him on his elevation to the see of Cæsarea, was disappointed at not receiving a reply.

BASIL TO PERGAMIUS.

"I am naturally forgetful, and have had a multitude of engagements, which has increased my infirmity. If I do not remember receiving a letter from

your nobleness, I believe you sent it to me; it is impossible you should be incorrect. Yet I am hardly in fault, but he who did not ask for an answer. However, you now receive from me what will at once account for what is past, and have a claim on you for a reply. So, when you next write, you must not think that you are making a second beginning of our correspondence, but merely paying your debt for my present letter. For though it be an acknowledgment of what has gone before, yet being more than twice as long, it will answer the other office too. Do you observe how sharp leisure makes me? My good friend, let me beg of you not to turn, as you have done, what is a small matter into a charge so great, that perhaps no greater baseness could be imputed to me. For a forgetfulness of friendships, and insolence from power, contain in them all that is wretched. Whether it is that we do not love, as the Lord has bid us, then we have lost His image; or whether we are puffed up and gorged with vain glory and boasting, we fall into the sure condemnation of the devil. Therefore, if you have accused me advisedly, pray for my escape from the sin which you discern in my conduct; if, on the other hand, from a habit I do not understand, you have fallen upon those words, I shall take comfort and shall tax your goodness to adduce facts in proof of it. Be sure of this, that my present annoyance has been the means of humbling me. I am not likely to forget you till I forget myself; so, for the future, do not take my engagements as a proof of a bad disposition."—*Ep.* 56.

Basil's election had been very distasteful to a certain

number of the bishops of his province ; who, finding they could not prevent it, refused to be present at his consecration, or to hold intercourse with him. Among these was Basil's uncle, Gregory. This was more than usually distressing, inasmuch as Gregory had been more than a common uncle to him. He had been closely connected with Basil's family circle, which was a sort of nursery of bishops and saints. His father, whose name also was Basil, and whose profession was that of rhetoric, was a man of landed property in Pontus and Cappadocia, and of good family, as was his wife Emmelia, Basil's mother. He numbered on the line of both his parents, high functionaries, military and civil. Nor was his descent less illustrious in a Christian aspect. His maternal grandfather was a martyr ; his father's parents had been driven to live seven years in the woods and mountains of Pontus, during the Dioclesian persecution. Basil was one of ten children ; three of them lived to be bishops ; four of them are held in remembrance as saints, St. Basil, St. Gregory Nyssen, St. Peter, and St. Macrina, besides his mother St. Emmelia. Another brother, Naucratius, embraced the life of a solitary, and was drowned while engaged in works of mercy. Such being the character of Basil's paternal home, a difference with Gregory, his paternal uncle, would, under any circumstances, have been painful ; but it so happened that the latter had been called to take on him a father's duties towards Basil and his brothers. His father had died when he was young, and Gregory, who was one of the bishops of Cappadocia, had superintended what remained of his education. His mind had already been formed by

three women, his grandmother Macrina, his mother Emmelia, and another Macrina, his elder sister.

Basil had conceived that his uncle's estrangement from him was removed; but on his saying so, his uncle wrote to him to deny the fact. On this he wrote the following letter, which happily had the desired effect.

BASIL TO HIS UNCLE GREGORY.

"I have kept silence; must there be no end of it? Shall I bear any longer to enforce this most heavy penalty of silence against myself—neither writing nor conversing with you? Indeed, in persisting hitherto in this melancholy determination, I seem to have a right to use the prophet's words—'I have been still, and refrained myself as a woman in travail;'—always anxious to see or hear from you, always disappointed for my sins. No other cause can be assigned for the present state of things, except that my estrangement from your affection is certainly an infliction on me for old transgressions. Yet, if the very name of estrangement be not irreligious, as shown towards you by whomsoever, yet certainly by me, to whom you have been from the first in place of a father. However, the time of my punishment has been long indeed. So I can hold no longer, and am the first to speak; beseeching you to remember both me and yourself, who have treated me, all through my life, with a greater tenderness than relationship could claim, and to love the city which I govern for my sake, instead of alienating yourself from it on my account.

"If, therefore, there is any consolation in Christ,

if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil my prayer; put an end at once to this gloom, making a beginning of a more cheerful state of things for the future, becoming yourself the guide of the rest towards right, not following another towards wrong. No one's features were ever more strongly marked, than your soul is characterized with peaceableness and mildness. It becomes such an one to draw others to him, and to give to all who approach him to be filled, as it were, with the fragrant oil of his own amiableness. There may be obstacles just now; but, in a short time, the blessedness of peace will be recognised. But while our dissension gives opportunity to tale-bearers, our complaints of each other must necessarily be increasing. It is unbecoming in other parties to neglect me, but more than any, in your venerableness. Tell me if I am any where wrong, and I shall be the better in future. But it is impossible to do so without intercourse. If, on the other hand, I have committed no offence, why am I hated? This I say by way of self-defence.

"What those churches will say for themselves, which are so unbecomingly partners in our dispute, I will not ask, for I have no wish to give offence by this letter, but to remove it. You are too clear-sighted for any thing of this kind to escape you; and will take and lay before others a much more accurate view than I can. Indeed, you were sensible of the existing evils in the churches before I was, and have felt them more keenly, having long ago learnt of the Lord not to despise any of the least of His matters. At present, however, the mischief is not confined to one or two individuals, but whole

cities and communities are partners in our misfortune. Comfort me then, either by coming to see me, or by writing, or by sending for me, or in any way you will. My own earnest wish is, that you would make your appearance in my church, so that both I and my people might be benefited by the sight and the words of your grace. This will be best, if possible; but I shall welcome any proposition which you will make. Only, let me beg of you to give me some sure intelligence of your intention."—*Ep.* 59.

This misunderstanding he surmounted: but the following was of a far more painful matter, being not so much a misunderstanding between friends, as a real difference of view, which did not admit of removal.

Eustathius had been one of the pupils of Arius at Alexandria, and was admitted into orders at Antioch by the Arians. After a time, he joined the Semi-Arian party in Asia Minor, with whom he continued some years. On the death of Constantius, this party lost the patronage of the court; and during the reign of Valens, an Arian prince, Eustathius deserted them, and, after a time, professed himself of the emperor's religion. Up to this date he had the friendship of Basil, as bearing about him all the marks of a zealous and honest, though inconsistent, man. He was austere in his manner of life, professed a most strict adherence to truth, and seemed to be possessed of the genuine spirit of Christian love. On occasion of his first lapsing after the death of Constantius, he carried the appearance of sincerity

so far as even to betake himself to Rome for the purpose of subscribing the orthodox creed, and to acknowledge publicly his offence. Afterwards he became a bitter enemy of Basil. The following letter was written A.D. 375, about the time of the first rupture between him and Basil, and is interesting as disclosing some particulars of the early life of the latter.

BASIL IN ANSWER TO EUSTATHIUS, BISHOP OF SEBASTE.

"There is a time for silence, and a time for speaking, as the preacher says; so now, after keeping silence a sufficient time, it is seasonable to open my mouth in order to explain what is unknown. For great Job himself endured his afflictions silently a long while, manifesting his fortitude by bearing up against the heaviest afflictions. But after fulfilling that silent conflict, that continued confinement of his grief in the deep of his heart, then he opened his mouth and uttered what all know, and spoke aloud what is told us in Scripture. I too have been near three years silent, and may aspire to the prophet's boast, being as one who heard not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs. Thus I shut up within me the pain I felt from the calumnies heaped upon me. I expected the evil would cure itself; for I supposed that things were said against me, not from any bad feeling, but from ignorance. Now, however, that I perceive the enmity against me continues, and that the parties who manifest it show no sorrow for what they have said, nor are anxious to heal what is past, but increase their united efforts towards the same

end which they originally proposed, to annoy me and injure my reputation with the brethren, silence is no longer safe.

"After long time spent in vanity, and almost the whole of my youth vanishing in the idle toil of studying that wisdom which God has made folly; when at length, roused as from a deep sleep, I gazed upon the marvellous light of Gospel truth, and discerned the unprofitableness of the wisdom taught by the perishing authorities of this world, much did I bewail my wretched life, and pray that guidance would be vouchsafed to me for an entrance into the doctrines of godliness. And above all was it a care to me to reform my heart, which the long society of the corrupt had perverted. So when I read the Gospel, and perceived thence that the best start towards perfection was to sell my goods and share them with indigent brethren, and altogether to be reckless of this life, and to rid my soul of all sympathy with things on earth, I earnestly desired to find some brother who had made the same choice, and who might passage with me over the brief wave of this life. Many did I find in Alexandria, many in the rest of Egypt, and in Palestine, in Cœle-Syria and Mesopotamia, whose abstinence and endurance I admired, and whose constancy in prayer I was amazed at; how they overcame sleep, being broken by no natural necessity, bearing ever a high and free spirit in hunger and thirst, in cold and nakedness, not regarding the body, nor enduring to spend any thought upon it, but living as if in flesh not their own; how they showed in deed what it is to sojourn in this world, what it is to have our conversation in heaven. Ad-

miring and extolling the life of these men, who could so in deed carry about with them the dying of the Lord Jesus, I desired that I myself, as far as I could attain, might be an imitator of them.

"With this object, finding that there were persons in my own country attempting to rival them, I deemed I had found some aid towards my own salvation, and I made what was seen the token of what was hidden. And since it is difficult to get at the secret heart of a man, I reckoned it was argument enough of humbleness to have an humble clothing; and I gave my faith to the coarse garment, and the girdle, and the untanned sandals. And when many would have seduced me from their converse, I bore it not, seeing that these preferred an hardness of life to self-indulgence: and being taken with their extraordinary life, I was zealous in my defence of them. It followed that I would not admit of any attack upon their doctrines, though many contended that they were unsound in creed, and secretly disseminated the doctrines of their master, the founder of the now prevailing heresy. Having never myself heard such from them, I thought the report calumnious. Afterwards, when called to the government of the church, what these chosen guardians and keepers of my life turned out to be, with their pretences to loving aid and intercourse, I say not, lest its seeming incredibility should reflect upon myself, or the belief of it should infect the hearer with misanthropy. This, indeed, was almost my calamity, had not God's mercies quickly prevented me; for I well nigh fell into a suspicion of every one, thinking truth was nowhere to be found, being wounded in my mind by

their deceitful blows. Yet for a while I kept up some sort of intercourse with them; and we had several discussions about doctrinal points, and it appeared as if we really agreed. They heard from me the same doctrine which I had ever expressed; for though I have done many things worthy of groans, yet so much I may boast in the Lord, that I never held erroneous views concerning the Divine nature, nor have had to change my profession. The idea of God which I had from my blessed mother and her mother, Macrina, that has ever grown within me. I did not change about, as reason unfolded, but perfected the rudiments of faith thus delivered to me.

"I am charged of blasphemy towards God, though neither former writing, nor word of mouth uttered publicly, as is usual without book in the churches of God, can be brought against me. Ask yourself. How often have you visited me at my monastery on the Iris, when my most religious brother, Gregory, was with me, following the same rule of life as myself. Did you then hear from me any such thing? or catch any hint of it, strong or slight? How many days did we pass together as friends in the village opposite with my mother, and discussed subjects night and day, in which we found each other sympathise?

"A man ought to take much thought—nay, pass many sleepless nights, and seek his duty from God with many tears, ere he ventures to break up a friendship. They ground their conduct altogether on one letter, and that a doubtful one. But in reality this letter is not the cause of their separation. I am ashamed to mention the real reason; and I should

not tell it now, nor indeed ever, had not their present proceedings made it necessary for the general good to publish an account of their whole design. These honest persons considered that intimacy with me would stand in the way of their promotion; so, since they had committed themselves by a subscription to a creed which I imposed on them, (not that I at that time distrusted their views, I own it, but from a wish to obviate the suspicions which most of my brethren who felt with me entertained against them,) to prevent their rejection on the part of the now ascendant party, on account of this confession, they then renounced my communion: and this letter was pitched upon as a pretext for the rupture. There cannot be a clearer proof of this than the fact, that on their disowning me, they circulated their accusations on every side before acquainting me with them. Their charge was in the hands of others seven days before it reached me: and these persons had received it from others, and intended to send it on. I knew this at the time from friends who sent me certain intelligence of their measures; but I determined to keep silence, till He, who brings to light the deep secrets, should make manifest their plans by the clearest and most cogent evidence."—*Ep.* 223.

Sensitive, anxious, and affectionate as Basil appears in his letters, he had a reserve and sedateness of manner which his contemporaries sometimes attributed to pride, sometimes to timidity. Gregory Nazianzen notices the former charge, and exclaims, "Is it possible for a man to embrace lepers, abasing himself so far, and yet to be supercilious towards

those who are in health? to waste his flesh with continence, yet be swollen in soul with empty elation? to condemn the Pharisee, and to enlarge on his fall through pride, and to know that Christ descended even to a servant's form, and ate with publicans, and washed the disciples' feet, and disdained not the Cross, that He might nail to it *my* sin, and yet to soar beyond the clouds and count no one his equal; as appears to them who are jealous of him? But I suppose it was the self-possession of his character, and composure and polish, which they named pride."—*Orat.* 20. This testimony is the stronger, as coming from one whom on one occasion, as we shall see by and by, Basil did offend, by behaviour which is specified by a modern historian as the great specimen of his pride. Gregory certainly did not so feel it afterwards, though Gibbon thereupon calls Basil a "haughty prelate," as elsewhere for his resistance to Modestus he reproaches him with "inflexible pride." Indeed, Basil's doctrinal views on the subject of pride have even approved themselves to the fastidious judgment of Protestant controversialists, who, in their warfare with Rome, have often alleged with great satisfaction a passage which it will not be out of place here to quote.

"This is the perfect and absolute glorying in God," says Basil, "when a man is not elated by his own righteousness, but knows himself to be wanting in true righteousness, and justified by faith alone, which is in Christ. And Paul glories in despising his own righteousness and seeking that which is through Christ, a 'righteousness which is of God unto faith, in order that he may know Him, and the power of

His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being brought into the form of His death, if by any means he may attain unto the resurrection from the dead.' Here is cast down all height of haughtiness; nothing is left to thee for boasting, O man, whose glorying and hope lies in mortifying all that is thine, and living the life to come, which is in Christ; of which we, as having the first fruits, already pursue, living wholly in the grace and gift of God. And God it is 'who worketh in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.' That Pharisee, intrusive and extreme in pride, who not only was confident in himself, but even scoffed at the publican in God's presence, lost the glory of justification for the cause of his pride. Such, too, was the fall of the Israelites; for being elated against the Gentiles, as unclean, they became really unclean, and the Gentiles were cleansed. And the righteousness of the one became as a filthy rag: while the iniquity and the ungodliness of the Gentiles was wiped out through faith.

"How, then, shall we attain to saving humility, abandoning the deadly elevation of pride? by practising something which is humble in all we do, and by overlooking nothing, from an idea that we shall gain no harm from it. For the soul is influenced by outward observances, and is shaped and fashioned according to its actions. Let, then, thy appearance, and garment, and gait, and sitting, and table, and bedroom, and house, and its furniture, all be directed according to lowliness. And thy speech and singing and conversation, in like manner, look towards meanness, and not exaltation. But perhaps thou art

awarded the highest seat, and men observe and honour thee? Become equal to those who are in subjection; 'not lording it over God's heritage,' saith scripture; be not like to rulers of this world. For whoso would be first, him our Lord bids be servant of all. In a word, follow after humility, as one enamoured of it. Be in love with it, and it shall glorify thee. So shalt thou nobly journey on to true glory, which is among the Angels, which is with God; and Christ will acknowledge thee as His own disciple, before the Angels, and will glorify thee, if thou learn to copy His humility."—*Hom. de Humil.*

The opposite charge to which his reserve gave rise, was that of timidity. It is remarkable that he himself, writing to a friend, playfully notices "the want of spirit" and "the sluggishness" of the Cappadocians, and attributes these qualities to himself. *Ep.* 48. Accordingly, after his death, the heretic Eunomius accuses the opponent of Valens and Modestus of being "a coward and craven, and skulking from the heavier labours," speaking contemptuously of his "retired cottage and his closely fastened door, and his fluttered manner on persons entering, and his voice, and look, and expression of countenance, and the other symptoms of fear." *Greg. Nyss. App.* p. 46. This malicious account may be just so far founded on truth, as to make it worth while noticing a curious difference in a little matter which it brings out between Ambrose and Basil; for while the latter is here represented as fastening his door, it was the peculiarity of Ambrose never to shut himself into his house, but to be accessible at all times. Philostorgius, the Arian historian, in like manner speaks

of Basil, as "superior to many in the power of discussion; but, from timidity of mind, withdrawing from public disputations." And Gregory makes several remarks of his friend, which serve to illustrate the shyness or refinement of mind complained of by these writers. The following is curious, as bringing Basil before our eyes.

"Such were the virtues of the man, such the fulness of his celebrity, that others, in order to gain reputation, copied many even of his peculiarities, nay, his bodily imperfections; I mean, for instance, his paleness, his beard, the character of his gait, his deliberateness in speaking, as being generally deep in thought, and intent on his subject; which things most of them copying ill, and indeed not understanding, turned into gloom;—moreover, the quality of his garment, and the shape of his bed, and his mode of eating, nothing of which was studied in him, but natural and spontaneous. And you may fall in with many Basils as far as outside goes, figures in shadow; it is too much to say echoes. For echo, at least, repeats the last syllables even more clearly; but these are much farther off from Basil than they desire to be near him. Moreover, it is no longer a common, but the greatest of honours, and with reason, to have ever happened to have been in his company, or to have shown attentions to him, or to carry the memory of any thing said or done by him, playfully or in earnest, since the by-doings of this man are more precious and illustrious than what others do with labour."—*Orat.* 20.

Allusion is made in these last words to Basil's

playfulness. This quality his letters abundantly vindicate to him, though it is of a pensive sort. Lest the reader should go away with a more austere notion of him, I will add the following passage from St. Gregory.

"Who made himself more amiable than he to the well-conducted? or more severe when men were in sin? whose very smile was many a time praise, whose silence a reproof, punishing the evil in a man's own conscience. If he was not full of talk, nor a jester, nor a holder forth, nor generally acceptable from being all things to all men, and showing good-nature; what then? Is not this to his praise, not his blame, among sensible men? Yet, if we ask for this, who so pleasant as he in social intercourse, as I know who have had such experience of him? Who could tell a story with more wit? who could jest so playfully? who could give a hint more delicately, so as neither to be overstrong in his rebuke, nor remiss through his gentleness."—*Orat.* 20.

Basil died on the first of January, A.D. 379, having been born in 329. He rallied before his death, and his last discourses were delivered with more strength than usual. His last act was to ordain some of his immediate disciples, that "the things which he had heard" and taught might be transmitted to the next generation, together with the sacred ministry itself. He died with the words "Into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

CHAPTER VII.

LABOURS OF BASIL.

"Then I said, I have laboured in vain ; I have spent my strength for nought, and in vain : yet surely my judgment is with the Lord, and my work with my God."

The instruments raised up by Almighty God for the accomplishment of His purposes are of two kinds, equally gifted with faith and piety, but from natural temper and talent, education, or other circumstances, differing in the means by which they promote their sacred cause. The first of these are men of acute and ready mind, with accurate knowledge of human nature, and large plans, and persuasive and attractive bearing, endued with prudence, patience, instinctive tact and decision in conducting matters, as well as boldness and zeal. Such have been many churchmen, in ages whether of more or of less religious error. Such seems to have been the intrepid and single-minded Hildebrand, whose misfortune it was (as they tell us who have studied his times) to have to choose between the popular religion and philosophy, and the entire abandonment of religion. Such, in a purer age, was the majestic Ambrose ; such the never-wearied Athanasius. These latter luminaries of the Church came into public life early, and thus learned how to cope with the various tempers, views, and measures of the men they encountered

there. Athanasius was but twenty-seven when he went with Alexander to the Nicene Council, and the year after he was Bishop of Alexandria. Ambrose was consecrated soon after the age of thirty.

Again, there is an instrument in the hand of Providence, of less elaborate and splendid workmanship, less marvellous in its political endowments, so to call them, yet not less beautiful in its texture, nor less precious its material. Such is the retired and thoughtful student, who remains years and years in the solitude of a college or a monastery, chastening his soul in secret, raising it to high thought and single-minded purpose, and when at length called into active life, conducting himself with firmness, guilelessness, zeal like a flaming fire, and all the sweetness of pureness and integrity. Unlike the first-mentioned weapon of God's designs, such an one is generally unsuccessful in his own day; he is too artless to persuade, too severe to please: unskilled in the weaknesses of human nature, unfurnished in the resources of ready wit, negligent of men's applause, unsuspicious, open-hearted, he does his work, and so leaves it; and it seems to die; but in the generation after him it lives again, and at a distance of time it is difficult to say, which of the two classes of men have served the cause of truth the more effectually. Such, perhaps, was Basil, who issued from the solitudes of Pontus to rule like a king, and minister like the lowest in the kingdom; yet to meet little but disappointment, and to quit life prematurely in pain and sorrow. Such was his friend, the accomplished Gregory, however different in other respects from him, who left his father's roof

for an heretical city, raised a church there, and was driven back into retirement by his own people, as soon as his triumph over the false doctrine was secured. And such, too, we may account the bold and munificent Laud, who was more than forty years old before he quitted Oxford: firm, energetic, unfortunate in his generation, but in the event "the second founder," as one has called him, "of the English Church." No comparison is, of course, attempted here between the religious excellence of the two descriptions of men; each of them serves God according to the peculiar gifts given to him. If we might continue our instances by way of comparison, we should say that St. Paul reminds us of the former, and Jeremiah of the latter.

These remarks are intended as introductory to portions of Basil's letters, on various subjects indeed, but all illustrative of the then distracted state of the Church in his part of Christendom, and of his labours, apparently fruitless at the time, in restoring it to truth and peace.

The disorders of Christendom, and especially of the East, and still more of Asia Minor, were so great in Basil's day, that a spectator might have foretold the total overthrow of the Church. So violent a convulsion never has been experienced in Christendom since; it would almost seem as if the powers of evil, foreseeing what the kingdom of the saints would be, when once heathen persecutions ceased, were making a final effort to destroy it. In Asia Minor the Church was almost "without form and void;" religious interests were reduced, as it were, to a state of chaos, and Basil seems to have been the

principle of truth and order, divinely formed, divinely raised up, for harmonizing the discordant elements, and bringing them to unity of faith and love. However, the fruit did not show itself in his day. Valens persecuted in behalf of Arianism till the year before his death; the Semi-Arians continued their schism after it: and trying to lead them towards the truth, he at once exposed himself to calumnies from his brethren, as if favouring their heresy, and from them, as if maintaining an opposite one. There were dissensions, too, within the Church, as well as without it. I have already spoken of Basil's difference with his predecessor Eusebius, and of a party which his uncle joined, which was formed against him on his succeeding him. Jealousies or suspicions, of which he was the subject, extended throughout his exarchate. He seems to have had authority, more or less defined, over the whole of the country which the Romans called Pontus, which was more than half Asia Minor, and comprised in it eleven provinces. Ancyra, Neocæsarea, Tyana, among other metropolitan sees, acknowledged him more or less as their ecclesiastical superior. Now we have records of his being opposed by the bishops of each of these cities. When he passed out of his own district into the neighbouring patriarchate of Antioch, he found that metropolis distracted by schism; four bishops in the see at once, two heretical, a third acknowledged by the Latins and Alexandrians, a fourth in communion with himself. When he went on to the South and West, and negociated with Alexandria and Rome for the settlement of these disorders, he met with nothing but disappointment,

or rather slight and want of sympathy. Such is the history of his episcopate,—for which he exchanged his sweet monastic life.

As to the party who withstood his election, he overcame most of them in the course of a few years, as he did his uncle, by firmness and kindness, though for a time they gave him trouble. "Our friends," he says to Eusebius of Samosata, shortly after his elevation, "have not shown themselves at all better than we expected. They made their appearance immediately you were gone, and said and did many disagreeable things; and at length departed, confirming their schism with us."—*Ep.* 20. Three years afterwards he complains to the same friend of the impediments their conduct threw in the way of his exertions for the Church. "That you may not suppose," he says, "that the interests of the Churches are betrayed to our enemies by my negligence, I would have your reverence know, that the bishops in communion with me, whether from disinclination, or from continued suspicion of me and want of frankness, or from that opposition to right measures, which the devil engenders, refuse to act with me. In profession, indeed, the greater number of us are altogether, including the excellent Bosporius; but in truth they act with me in not one even of the most important matters. The despondency which this occasions is the principal cause why I do not get well, indisposition returning to me continually from excessive grief. What can I do by myself? the canons, as you yourself know, do not permit one man to put them in force. Yet what remedy have I not tried? What rule is there to which I

have not called their attention, by letter or in conversation? For they came up into town on the news of my death; and when it pleased God that they found me alive, I represented to them what was reasonable. And they defer to me when present, and promise all that is reasonable; but when they have gone away, they recur to their own opinion."—*Ep.* 141.

Among the injuries which Eustathius inflicted upon Basil, was that of spreading a report that he was a follower of Apollinaris. This calumny, which is alluded to in the letter which I extracted in the last chapter, seems to have reached and been believed by the bishop of Ancyra, by name Athanasius; who having been once an Arian, had since conformed, and shown a good deal of zeal for the true faith. This bishop said some very harsh things of Basil in consequence; which led the latter, who had an esteem for him, to write him the following letter:—

BASIL TO ATHANASIUS BISHOP OF ANCYRA.

"I am told by persons who come to me from Ancyra, and that by many more than I can number, and all saying the same thing, that you, dear friend (how may I use mild terms?) have not the kindest recollections of me, nor feel in the way natural to you. For myself, nothing that can happen astonishes me, be sure of that; there is no one at all whose change would contradict my expectation, since I have long learned the weakness of human nature and its proneness to turn right round. Hence I think it no great matter, though my cause has fallen

back, and for the honour which I had, calumny and slight are my present portion. But this is what seems to me so very strange and preternatural, that you should be the man to be angry or incensed with me; nay, and to use threats against me, as they say who heard them. Now, as to the threats, I must speak frankly, I plainly laughed at them. Indeed, I should be a very child to fear such bugbears. But what is a real cause of apprehension to me, and of much anxiety, is, that an accurate judgment, such as yours, which I believed was preserved for the comfort of the Churches, both as a rare foundation of orthodoxy and a seed of ancient and genuine love, that it should so far yield to the existing state of things, as to trust the calumnies of chance-comers more than your long experience of myself, and to be carried away, without evidence, to such extravagant suspicions. Yet why do I say suspicions? for a person who was indignant, and who threatened, as they report of you, seems to have manifested the anger, not of suspicion, but of clear and unanswerable conviction.

"But as I have said, I ascribe it all to the times; for what was the trouble, excellent man, in a short letter, to have, as it were, discoursed with me by myself about what you would? or, if you did not like to trust such things to writing, to send for me? But if it was altogether necessary to speak out, and the impetuosity of anger left no time for delay, at any rate you might have made use of some intimate friend, who could keep a secret, to convey your message to us. But as things are, who has come to you on any business, whose ears have not been

filled with the charge, that I am writing and putting together certain mischievous things? For this was your very word, as accurate reporters say. I have thought a good deal on the subject, but am in as great difficulty as ever. It has come into my mind whether some heretic, maliciously giving my name to his own writing, has not distressed your orthodoxy, and led you to utter that speech. You yourself may free me from my perplexity, if you would kindly state, without reserve, what has induced you to take such offence at me."—*Ep.* 25.

Another achievement of the same Eustathius was the separation of a portion of the coast of Pontus from the Church of Cæsarea, which for a time caused Basil great despondency, as if he were being left solitary in all Christendom, without communion with other places. With the advice of the bishops of Cappadocia, he addressed an expostulation to these separatists for not coming to him; a portion of which runs as follows:—

"Up to this day I live in much affliction and grief, having the feeling present before me, that you are wanting to me. For when God tells me, who took on Him His sojourn in the flesh for the very purpose that, by patterns of duty, He might regulate our life, and might by His own voice announce to us the Gospel of the kingdom,—when He says, 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye love one another,' and whereas the Lord left His own peace to His disciples as a farewell gift, when about to complete the dispensation in the flesh, saying, 'Peace I leave with you, My peace I give you,' I

cannot persuade myself that without love to others, and without, as far as rests with me, peaceableness towards all, I can be called a worthy servant of Jesus Christ. I have waited a long while for the chance of your love paying us a visit. For ye are not ignorant that we, being exposed to all, as rocks running out in the sea, sustain the fury of the heretical waves, which, in that they break around us, do not cover the district behind. I say 'we,' in order to refer it, not to human power, but to the grace of God, who, by the weakness of men shows His power, as says the prophet in the person of the Lord, 'Will ye not fear Me, who have placed the sand as a boundary to the sea?' for by the weakest and most contemptible of all things, the sand, the Mighty One has bounded the great and full sea. Since, then, this is our position, it became your love to be frequent in sending true brothers to visit us who labour with the storm, and more frequently letters of love, partly to confirm our courage, partly to correct any mistake of ours. For we confess that we are liable to numberless mistakes, being men, and living in the flesh.

"Let not this consideration influence you,—'We dwell on the sea, we are exempt from the sufferings of the generality, we need no succour from others; so what is the good to us of foreign communion?' For the same Lord who divided the islands from the continent by the sea, bound the island Christians to the continental by love. Nothing, brethren, separates us from each other, but deliberate estrangement. We have one Lord, one faith, the same hope. The hands need each other; the feet steady

each other. The eyes possess their clear apprehension from agreement. We, for our part, confess our own weakness, and we seek your fellow-feeling. For we are assured, that though ye are not present in body, yet by the aid of prayer, ye will do us much benefit in these most critical times. It is neither decorous before men, nor pleasing to God, that you should make avowals which not even the Gentiles adopt, which know not God. Even they, as we hear, though the country they live in be sufficient for all things, yet, on account of the uncertainty of the future, make much of alliances with each other, and seek mutual intercourse as being advantageous to them. Yet we, the sons of fathers, who have laid down the law, that by brief notes the proofs of communion should be carried about from one end of the earth to the other, and that all should be citizens and familiars with all, now sever ourselves from the whole world, and are neither ashamed at our solitariness, nor shudder that on us is fallen the fearful prophecy of the Lord, 'Because of lawlessness abounding, the love of the many shall wax cold.'"—*Ep.* 203.

It does not appear what success attended this appeal; difficulties of a similar but more painful nature, which occurred at the same time, hide from us the sequel of the history. I allude to the alienation of the Church of Neocæsarea, a place dear to Basil as having been his residence in youth, the home of many of his relations, and the see of St. Gregory Thaumaturgus in the third century, from whom, through his father's family, Basil had received his principal traditions of Christian truth. A secret

attachment to Sabellian doctrine in the leading persons in the Church seems to have been one chief cause to the opposition shown him; but there were other causes unknown. It is remarkable that the coolness began in the episcopate of Musonius, whom Basil, however, mentions with much respect and gratitude. He thus speaks of him, on his death, in a letter of condolement addressed to the Neocæsareans. This was before Basil's elevation to the episcopate.

"A man is gone, undeniably pre-eminent among his contemporaries for all earthly endowments, the bulwark of his country, the ornament of the Churches, a pillar and ground of the truth, the firm stay of faith in Christ, a protection to his friends, invincible by his adversaries, a guardian of the rules of the Fathers, a foe to innovation; exemplifying in himself the Church's primitive fashion, moulding the form of the Church committed to him after its ancient constitution, as after some sacred image, so that those who lived with him seemed to have lived with those who have been luminaries in it for two hundred years, and more." He adds, "I would have you aware, that if this blessed man did not concur with me in the pacification of the Churches, on account of certain previous views, as he avowed to me, yet at least I omitted no opportunity, as God knows, and men who have had experience of me, of fellowship of sentiment with him, and of inviting his assistance in the struggle against heretics."—*Ep.* 28.

If Basil's Semi-Arian connexions brought suspicion upon himself in the eyes of Catholic believers, much more would they be obnoxious to persons

attached, as certain Neocæsareans were, to the Sabellian party, who were in the opposite extreme to the Semi-Arians, and their especial enemies in those times. It is not wonderful, then, that he had, some years after, to write to the Church in question in a strain like the following :—

"There has been a long silence on both sides, revered and well-beloved brethren, just as if there were angry feelings between us. Yet who is there so sullen and implacable towards the party which has injured him, as to lengthen out the resentment which has begun in disgust through almost a whole life of man? which is happening in our case, no just occasion of estrangement existing, as far as I myself know, but on the contrary, there being, from the first, many strong reasons for the closest friendship and unity. The greatest and first is this, our Lord's command, pointedly saying, 'By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another.' Next, if it tend much towards intimacy to have the same teachers, there are to you and to me the same teachers of God's mysteries and spiritual Fathers, who from the beginning were the founders of your Church. I mean the great Gregory, and all who succeeding in order to the throne of your episcopate, like stars rising one after another, have tracked the same course, so as to leave the tokens of the heavenly polity most clear to all who desire them. Why is it, then, O venerable among cities, for through you I address the whole city, that no civil writing comes from you, no welcome voice, but your ears are opened to those who aim at slander? What say I, brethren? not that I am a

sinless person; not that my life is not full of numberless faults. I know myself; and indeed I cease not my tears for my sins, if by any means I may be able to appease my God, and to escape the punishment threatened against them. But this I say: let him who judges me, hunt for motes in my eye, if he can say that his own is clear. And in a word, brethren, if my offences admit of cure, why does not such a one obey the Teacher of the Churches, saying, 'Reprove, rebuke, exhort?' If, on the other hand, my iniquity be past cure, why does he not withstand me to the face, and by publishing my transgressions, deliver the Churches from the mischief which I bring on them? There are bishops; let appeal be made to them. There is a clergy in each of God's dioceses; let the most eminent be assembled. Let whoso will, speak freely, that I may have to deal with a charge, not a slander. If the fault be in a point of faith, let the document be pointed out to me. Again let a fair and impartial inquiry be appointed. Let the accusation be read; let it be brought to the test, whether it does not arise from ignorance in the accuser, not from blame in the matter of the writing. For right things often do not seem such to those who are deficient in accurate judgment. Equal weights seem unequal, when the arms of the balance are of different sizes. Let no one suppose I am making excuses to evade the charge. It is put into your hands, dearest brethren, to investigate for yourselves the points alleged against me. If there be any thing you do not understand, put questions to me through appointed persons who will do justice to me; or ask of me explanations in writing. And

take all kinds of pains, that nothing may be left unsifted.

"What clearer evidence can there be of my faith, than that I was brought up by my grandmother, blessed woman, who came from you? I mean the celebrated Macrina, who taught me the words of the most blessed Gregory; which, as far as memory had preserved down to her day, she cherished herself, while she fashioned and formed me while yet a child, upon the doctrines of piety. And when I gained the capacity of thought, my reason being matured by full age, I travelled over much sea and land, and whomever I found walking in the rule of godliness delivered, those I set down as fathers.

"The fair thing would be to judge of me, not from one or two who do not walk uprightly in the truth, but from the multitude of bishops throughout the world, connected with me through the grace of the Lord. Make inquiry of Pisidians, Lycaonians, Isaurians, Phrygians of both provinces, Armenians your neighbours, Macedonians, Achæans, Illyrians, Gauls, Spaniards, the whole of Italy, Sicilians, Africans, the healthy part of Egypt, whatever is left of Syria; all of whom send letters to me, and in turn receive them from me. Whoso shuns communion with me, he, it cannot escape your accuracy, cuts himself off from the whole Church. Look round about, brethren, with whom do you hold communion? if you will not receive it from me, who remains to acknowledge you? Do not reduce me to the necessity of counselling any thing unpleasant concerning a Church so dear to me. Ask your fathers, and they

will tell you that though our districts were divided in position, yet in mind they were one, and were governed by one sentiment. Intercourse of the people was frequent; frequent the visits of the clergy; the pastors, too, had such mutual affection, that each used the other as teacher and guide in things pertaining to the Lord."—*Ep.* 204.

No good could come of these expostulations, however sincere and affectionate, when there was an heretical spirit at work at bottom. But now let us turn from the North to the South, from Basil's own neighbourhood to foreign Churches, from the small Sabellian party to the extended Arian. We shall find fresh trials befalling Basil. Arianism, indeed, itself, in spite of the patronage of Valens, languished and gave tokens of dying a natural death; but its disputants had raised questions which perplexed numbers whom they did not draw over; till at length the sacred subject in controversy was so clouded and confused by explanations, refinements, and distinctions, that there seemed no chance of Christians ever becoming unanimous in the orthodox creed. The particular party labouring under this mistiness of theological opinions were called Semi-Arians, or Macedonians, for reasons it is not necessary here to detail. They were zealous opponents of the Arians, though originating from among them; and, after the death of Constantius (A.D. 361), showed a disposition to come back to the Catholics. A union was partially effected, but matters were still in an unsatisfactory state on Basil's elevation (A.D. 371), when he wrote the following letter concerning them

to the great Athanasius, then on the point of removal from the Church below :—

BASIL TO ATHANASIUS, BISHOP OF ALEXANDRIA.

"I suppose there is no one feels such pain at the present condition, or rather want of condition of the Churches, as your Grace; comparing, as you naturally must, the present with the past, and considering the difference between them, and the certainty there is, if the evil proceeds at its present pace, that in a short time the Churches will altogether lose their present constitution. I have often thought with myself, if the corruption of the Churches seems so sad to me, what must be the feelings of one who has witnessed their former stability and unanimity in the faith. And as your Holiness has more abundant grief, so one must suppose you have greater anxiety for their welfare. For myself, I have been long of opinion, according to my imperfect understanding of ecclesiastical matters, that there was one way of succouring our Churches—viz., the co-operation of the bishops of the West. If they would but show, as regards our part of Christendom, the zeal which they manifested in the case of one or two heretics among themselves, there would be some chance of benefit to our common interests; the civil power would be persuaded by the argument derived from their number, and the laity in each place would follow their lead without hesitation. Now there is no one more able to accomplish this than yourself, from sagacity in counsel, and energy in action, and sympathy for the troubles of the brethren, and the reverence felt by the West for your hoary head. Most

Reverend Father, leave the world some memorial worthy of your former deeds. Crown your former numberless combats for religion with this one additional achievement. Send to the bishops of the West, from your Holy Church, men powerful in sound doctrine: relate to them our present calamities; suggest to them the mode of relieving us. Be a Samuel to the Churches; condole with flocks harassed by war; offer prayers of peace; ask grace of the Lord, that He may give some token of peace to the Churches. I know letters are but feeble instruments to persuade so great a thing; but while you need not to be urged on by others, more than generous combatants by the acclamation of boys, I, on the other hand, am not as if lecturing the ignorant, but adding speed to the earnest.

"As to the remaining matters of the East, you would perhaps wish the assistance of others, and think it necessary to wait for the arrival of the Western bishops. However, there is one Church, the prosperity of which depends entirely on yourself—Antioch. It is in your power so to manage the one party, and to moderate the other, as at length to restore strength to the Church by their union. You know, better than any one can tell you, that, as wise physicians prescribe, it is necessary to begin with treating the more vital matters. Now what can be more vital to Christendom than the welfare of Antioch? If we could but settle the differences there, the head being restored, the whole body would regain health."—*Ep.* 66.

I have already observed, that there were two

orthodox bishops at Antioch, one of the original succession, the other of the Arian, who had conformed. At the period under review, the Eastern bishops, and Basil among them, had bound themselves in communion with the bishop of the Arian stock; whereas Athanasius, as well as the Western Churches, were, from the very first, on terms of friendship and intercourse with the representative of the original line. In this letter, then, Basil invites Athanasius to what was, in fact, impossible, even to the influence and talents of the primate of Egypt; for, being committed to one side in dispute, he could not mediate between them. Nothing, then, came of the application.

Basil next addressed himself to the Western Churches. A letter is extant which is seemingly written to the then Pope Damasus, on the subject of the East. "What," he says, "can be more pleasant than to see persons who are so far disjoined by place, yet, by the union of love, connected into harmony of members in the body of Christ? Nearly the whole East, most reverend Father, by which I mean the country from Illyricum to Egypt, labours under a heavy storm and surge. We have been in expectation of a visitation from your tender compassion, as the one remedy of these evils. Your extraordinary love has in past time ever charmed our souls, and they were encouraged for a while by the glad report that there was to be a visitation from you. Send persons like minded with us, either to reconcile the parties at variance, or to bring the Churches of God to unity, or at least to give you a clearer understanding of the authors of the confusion: so

that you may be clear in future with whom it is fitting to hold communion. We are pressing for nothing at all new, but what was customary to the other blessed and divinely favoured men of old time, and especially to you. We know, from the memory of former times, as we learn on questioning our fathers, and from documents which we still preserve, that Dionysius [1], that most blessed bishop, who was eminent with you for orthodoxy and other virtues, visited by letter our Church of Cæsarea, and consoled by letter our fathers, and sent persons to ransom the brotherhood from captivity."—*Ep.* 70.

He next addressed the Western bishops generally, in two letters, which give a most painful account of the state of the East.

BASIL TO HIS HOLY BRETHREN, THE BISHOPS OF THE WEST.

"The merciful God, who ever joins comfort to affliction, has lately given me some consolation amid my sorrows, in the letters which our most Reverend Father, Athanasius, has transmitted to us from your Holinesses. Our afflictions are well known without my telling; the sound of them has now gone forth over all Christendom. The doctrines of the fathers are despised; apostolical traditions are set at nought; the speculations of innovators hold sway in the Churches. Men have learned to be theorists instead of theologians. The wisdom of the world has the place of honour, having dispossessed the boasting of the Cross. The pastors are driven away, grievous

[1] Bishop of Rome, about A.D. 260.

wolves are brought in instead, and plunder the flock of Christ. Houses of prayer are destitute of preachers; the deserts are full of mourners: the old bewail, comparing what is with what was; more pitiable the young, as not knowing what they are deprived of. What has been said is sufficient to kindle the sympathy of those who are taught in the love of Christ, yet compared with the facts, it is far from reaching their seriousness."—*Ep.* 90.

In the second letter, addressed to the bishops of Italy and Gaul, he says:—

"The danger is not confined to one Church; not two or three only have fallen in with this heavy tempest. Almost from the borders of Illyricum down to the Thebais, this evil of heresy spreads itself. The doctrines of godliness are overturned; the rules of the Church are in confusion; the ambition of the unprincipled seizes upon places of authority; and the chief seat is now openly proposed as a reward for impiety; so that he whose blasphemies are the more shocking, is more eligible for the oversight of the people. Priestly gravity has perished; there are none left to feed the Lord's flock with knowledge; ambitious men are ever spending in purposes of self-indulgence and bribery, possessions which they hold in trust for the poor. The accurate observance of the canons is no more; there is no restraint upon sin. Unbelievers laugh at what they see, and the weak are unsettled; faith is doubtful, ignorance is poured over their souls, because the adulterators of the word in wickedness imitate the truth. Religious people keep silence; but every blas-

pheming tongue is let loose. Sacred things are profaned; those of the laity who are sound in faith avoid the places of worship, as schools of impiety, and raise their hands in solitude with groans and tears to the Lord in heaven.

"While, then, any Christians seem yet to be standing, hasten to us; hasten then to us, our own brothers; yea, we beseech you. Stretch out your hands, and raise us from our knees, suffer not the half of the world to be swallowed up by error; nor faith to be extinguished in the countries whence it first shone forth. What is most melancholy of all, even the portion among us which seems to be sound, is divided in itself, so that calamities beset us like those which came upon Jerusalem when it was besieged."—*Ep.* 93.

Elsewhere Basil says—"The name of the episcopate has at length attached to wretched men, the slaves of slaves, none of the servants of God choosing to make himself their rivals, none but the abandoned."—*Ep.* 239. His friend Gregory gives us, in various parts of his works, the very same account of the Eastern Church in his day. "At this time," he says, "the most holy order is like to become the most contemptible portion of all that is ours. For the chief seat is gained by evil doing more than by virtue; and the sees belong not to the more worthy, but to the more powerful. A ruler is easily found, without effort, but recent in point of reputation, sown and sprung up both at once, as fable speaks of giants. We make saints in a day, and we bid men have wisdom who have not learned it, nor brought before-

hand anything to their Order, besides the will to rise to it."—*Orat.* 20.

The letters addressed to the Western bishops, which have already been reviewed, were written in 372. In the course of three years, Basil's tone changes about his brethren : he had cause to be dissatisfied with them, and above all with Pope Damasus, who showed little zeal for the welfare of the East. Basil's opinion of him is expressed in various letters. For instance, a fresh envoy was needed for the Roman mission ; he had thoughts of engaging his brother Gregory, bishop of Nyssa. "But," he says, "I see no persons who can go with him, and I feel that he is altogether inexperienced in ecclesiastical matters ; and that though a candid person would both value and improve his acquaintance, yet *when a man is high and haughty*, and *sits aloft*, and is, in consequence, unable to hear such as speak truth to him from the earth, what good can come for the Common weal, from his intercourse with one *who is not of the temper to give in to low flattery?*"—*Ep.* 215. This is not complimentary to Damasus. In another letter, he says to his friend Eusebius, "The saying of Diomede suggests itself as applicable, 'I would thou hadst not begged, *for haughty is that man.*' For, in truth, an elated mind, if courted, is sure to become only still more contemptuous. Besides, if the Lord be intreated, what need we more ? but if God's wrath remain, what succour lies for us in *Western superciliousness*[1] ? They neither

[1] τῆς δυτικῆς ὀφρύος.

know nor bear to learn the true state of things, but pre-occupied by false suspicions, they are now doing just what they did before in the case of Marcellus, when they quarrelled with those who told them the truth, and by their measures strengthened the heresy. As to myself, I had in mind to write to their leader, putting aside form,—nothing, indeed, ecclesiastical, but just so much as to insinuate, that they do not know our real state, nor go the way to learn it; and generally, concerning the impropriety of pressing upon those who are humbled by temptations, or of considering haughtiness as dignity, a sin which is, by itself, sufficient to make God our enemy."—*Ep.* 239.

Though he began to despair of aid from the West, he did not less need it. By the year 376, matters had got worse in the East, and in spite of his dissatisfaction, he was induced to make a fresh application to his distant brethren. His main object was to reconcile the East and West together, whereas the latter, so far from supporting the Catholics of Asia against the Arians, had been led to acknowledge a separate communion at Antioch, and had thrown suspicion upon the orthodoxy of Basil and his friends. "Why," he expostulates, "has no writing of consolation come to us, no visitation of the brethren, no other of such attentions as are due to us from the law of love? This is the thirteenth year since the heretical war rose against us, during which more afflictions have come on the Churches, than are remembered since Christ's Gospel was preached. Matters have come to this:—the people have left

their houses of prayer, and assemble in deserts; a pitiable sight, women and children, old men and others infirm, wretchedly faring in the open air amid the most profuse rains, and snow-storms, and winds, and frost of winter; and again in summer under a scorching sun. To this they submit, because they will not have part in the wicked Arian leaven." *Ep.* 342. He repeats this miserable description in another letter, addressed about the same time specially to the bishops of Italy and Gaul. "Only one offence is now vigorously punished, an accurate observance of our fathers' traditions. For this cause the pious are driven from their countries and transported into the deserts. The iniquitous judges have no reverence for the hoary head, nor for pious abstinence, nor for a Gospel life continued from youth to age. The people are in lamentation; in continual tears at home and abroad; condoling in each other's sufferings. Not a heart so stony but at a father's loss must feel bereavement. There is a cry in the city, a cry in the country, in the roads, in the deserts; one pitiable voice of all uttering melancholy things. Joy and spiritual cheerfulness are no more; our feasts are turned to mourning; our houses of prayer are shut up; our altars deprived of the spiritual worship. No longer are there Christians assembling, teachers presiding, saving instructions, celebrations, hymns by night, or that blessed exultation of souls, which arises from communion and fellowship of spiritual gifts. Lament for us; that the Only-begotten is blasphemed, and there is no one to protest; the Holy Spirit is set at nought, and he who could refute, is an exile. Polytheism has got possession. They

have among them a great God and a lesser; 'Son' is considered not to denote nature but to be a title of honour. The Holy Spirit does not complete the Trinity, nor partake in the divine and Blessed Nature, but, as if one among creatures, is carelessly and idly added to Father and Son. The ears of the simple are led astray, and have become accustomed to heretical profaneness. The infants of the Church are fed in the words of impiety. For what can they do? Baptisms are in Arian hands; the care of travellers; visitation of the sick; consolation of mourners; succour of the distressed; helps of all sorts; administration of the mysteries; which all, being performed by them, became a bond to the people to be on a good understanding with them; so that in a little while, even though liberty be granted us, no hope will remain that they, who are encompassed by so lasting a deceit, should be brought back again to the acknowledgment of the truth."—*Ep.* 243.

I will add one letter more; written several years before these last; and addressed to Evagrius, a priest of Antioch, who had taken part in Basil's negotiations with Rome, and had expressed an intention, which he did not fulfil, of communicating with Meletius, the bishop of Antioch, whom Basil and the East acknowledged. The letter insinuates the same charges against the Western bishops, which we have seen him afterwards expressing with freedom.

BASIL TO EVAGRIUS, PRESBYTER.

"So far from being impatient at the length of your letter, I assure you I thought it even short, from the

pleasure it gave me reading it. For is there any thing more pleasing than the idea of peace? Or, is any thing more suitable to the sacred office, or more acceptable to the Lord, than to take measures for effecting it? May you have the reward of the peace-maker, since so blessed an office has been the object of your good desires and earnest efforts. At the same time, believe me, my revered friend, I will yield to none in my earnest wish and prayer to see the day when those who are one in sentiment shall all fill the same assembly. Indeed, it would be monstrous to feel pleasure in the schisms and divisions of the churches, and not to consider that the greatest of goods consists in the knitting together the members of Christ's body. But, alas! my inability is as real as my desire. No one knows better than yourself, that time alone is the remedy of ills that time has matured. Besides, a strong and vigorous treatment is necessary to get at the root of the complaint. You will understand this hint, though there is no reason why I should not speak out.

"Self-importance, when rooted by habit in the mind, yields to the exertions of no one man, nor one letter, nor a short time; unless there be some arbiter in whom all parties have confidence, suspicions and collisions will never altogether cease. If indeed the influence of Divine grace were shed upon me, and gave me power in word and deed and spiritual gifts to prevail with these rival parties, then this daring experiment might be demanded of me; though, perhaps, even then you would not advise me to attempt this adjustment of things by myself, without the co-operation of the bishop [Meletius of Antioch] on

whom principally falls the care of the church. But he cannot come hither, nor can I easily undertake a long journey while the winter lasts, or rather I cannot any how, for the Armenian mountains will be soon impassable even to the young and vigorous, to say nothing of my continued bodily ailments. I have no objection to write to tell him all this; but I have no expectation that writing will lead to anything, for I know his cautious character, and after all, written words have little power to convince the mind. There are so many things to urge, and to hear, and to reply to, and to object, that a letter has no soul, and is in fact but waste paper. However, as I have said, I will write. Only give me credit, most religious and dear brother, for having no private feeling in the matter. Thank God, I have such towards no one. I have not busied myself in the investigation of the supposed or real complaints which are brought against this or that man; so my opinion has a claim on your attention as that of one who really cannot act from partiality or prejudice. I only desire, through the Lord's good-will, that all things may be done with ecclesiastical propriety.

"I was vexed to find from my dear son, Dorotheus, our associate in the ministry, that you had been unwilling to communicate with him. This was not the kind of conversation which you had with me, as well as I recollect. As to my sending to the West, it is quite out of the question. I have no one fit for the service. Indeed, when I look round, I seem to have no one on my side. I can but pray I may be found in the number of those seven thousand who have not bent the knee to Baal. I know the present

persecutors of us all seek my life ; yet that shall not diminish ought of the zeal which I owe to the Churches of God." — *Ep.* 156.

The reader cannot have failed to remark the studiously courteous tone which the foregoing letters display. The truth is, Basil had to deal on all hands with most untoward materials, which one single harsh or heedless word would have served to set into a blaze. Thus he, the Exarch of Cæsarea, made himself the servant of all. "My brother Dorotheus," he writes to Peter of Alexandria in 377, "distressed me by failing, as you report, in gentleness and mildness in his conversations with your excellency. I attribute this to the unkindness of the times. For I seem, for my sins, to prosper in nothing, since the worthiest brethren are found deficient in gentleness and fitness for their office, from not acting according to my wishes."—*Ep.* 266.

Basil did not live to see the Churches, for which he laboured, in a more Catholic condition. The notes of the Church were impaired and obscured in his part of Christendom, and he had to fare on as he best might,—admiring, courting, yet coldly treated by the Latin world, desiring the friendship of Rome, yet wounded by her superciliousness,—suspected of heresy by Damasus, and accused by Jerome of pride.

CHAPTER VIII.

BASIL AND GREGORY.

"What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad?"

It often happens that men of very dissimilar talents and tastes are attracted together by their very dissimilitude. They live in intimacy for a time, perhaps a long time, till their circumstances alter, or some sudden event comes to try them. Then the peculiarities of their respective minds are brought out into action; and quarrels ensue, which end in coolness or separation. It would not be right or true to say that this is exemplified in the instance of the two blessed Apostles, whose "sharp contention" is related in the book of Acts; for they had been united in spirit once for all by a divine leading; and yet their strife reminds us of what takes place in life continually. And it so far resembled the every-day quarrels of friends, in that it arose from difference of temper and character in those exalted servants of God. The zealous heart of the Apostle of the Gentiles endured not the presence of one who had swerved in his course; the compassionate spirit of Barnabas felt that a first fault ought not to be a last trial. Such are the two main characters which are found in the Church,—high energy, and sweetness of temper; far from incompatible of course, united in

Apostles, though in different relative proportions, yet only partially combined in ordinary Christians, and often altogether parted from each other.

This contrast of character, leading, first, to intimacy, then to difference, is interestingly displayed, though painfully, in one passage of the history of Basil and Gregory;—Gregory the affectionate, the tender-hearted, the man of quick feelings, the accomplished, the eloquent preacher,—and Basil, the man of firm resolve and hard deeds, the high-minded ruler of Christ's flock, the diligent labourer in the field of ecclesiastical politics. Thus they differed; yet not as if they had not much in common still; both had the blessing and discomfort of a sensitive mind; both were devoted to an ascetic life; both were men of classical tastes; both were special champions of the orthodox creed; both were skilled in argument, and successful in their use of it; both were in highest place in the Church, the one Exarch of Cæsarea, the other Patriarch of Constantinople. I will now attempt to sketch the history of their intimacy.

Basil and Gregory were both natives of Cappadocia, but here, again, under different circumstances; Basil was born of a good family, and with Christian ancestors; Gregory was the son of the bishop of Nazianzus, who had been brought up an idolater, or rather an Hypsistarian, a mongrel sort of religionist, part Jew, part Pagan. He was brought over to Christianity by the efforts of his wife Nonna, and at Nazianzus admitted by baptism into the Church. In process of time he was made bishop of that city; but not having very clear doctrinal views, he was

betrayed in 360 into signing the Ariminian creed, which caused him much trouble, and from which at length his son rescued him. Cæsarea being at no unsurmountable distance from Nazianzus, the two friends had known each other in their own country; but their intimacy began at Athens, whither they separately repaired for the purposes of education. This was about A.D. 351, when each of them was twenty-two years of age. Gregory came to the seat of learning shortly before Basil, and thus was able to be his host and guide on his arrival; but fame had reported Basil's merits before he came, and he seems to have made his way, in a place of all others most difficult to a stranger, with a facility peculiar to himself. He soon found himself admired and respected by his fellow-students; but Gregory was his only friend, and shared with him the reputation of talent and attainments. They remained at Athens four or five years; and, at the end of the time, made the acquaintance of Julian, since of evil name in history as the Apostate. Gregory thus describes in after life his early intimacy with Basil:—

"Athens and letters followed on my stage;
Others may tell how I encountered them;—
How in the fear of God, and foremost found
Of those who knew a more than mortal lore;—
And how, amid the venture and the rush
Of maddened youth with youth in rivalry,
My tranquil course ran like some fabled spring,
Which bubbles fresh beneath the turbid brine;
Not drawn away by those who lure to ill,
But drawing dear ones to the better part.
There, too, I gained a further gift of God,
Who made me friends with one of wisdom high,

Without compeer in learning and in life.
Ask ye his name?—in sooth, 'twas Basil, since
My life's great gain,—and then my fellow dear
In home, and studious search, and knowledge earned.
May I not boast how in our day we moved
A truest pair, not without name in Greece;
Had all things common, and one only soul
In lodgement of a double outward frame?
Our special bond, the thought of God above,
And the high longing after holy things.
And each of us was bold to trust in each,
Unto the emptying of our deepest hearts,
And then we loved the more, for sympathy
Pleaded in each, and knit the twain in one."

The friends had been educated for rhetoricians, and their oratorical powers were such, that they seemed to have every prize in prospect which a secular ambition could desire. Their names were known far and wide, their attainments acknowledged by enemies, and they themselves personally popular in their circle of acquaintance. It was under these circumstances that they took the extraordinary resolution of quitting the world together,—extraordinary the world calls it, utterly perplexed to find that any conceivable objects can, by any sane person, be accounted better than its own gifts and favours. They resolved to seek baptism of the Church, and to consecrate their gifts to the service of the Giver. With characters of mind very different,—the one grave, the other lively; the one desponding, the other sanguine; the one with deep feelings, the other with acute and warm;—they agreed together in holding, that the things that are seen are not to be compared to the things that are not seen.

They quitted the world, while it intreated them to stay. What passed when they were about to leave Athens, represents as in a figure the parting which they and the world took of each other. When the day of valediction arrived, their companions and equals, nay some of their tutors came about them, and resisted their departure by intreaties, arguments, and even by violence. This occasion showed, also, their respective dispositions; for the firm Basil persevered, and went; the tender-hearted Gregory was softened, and stayed a while longer. Basil, indeed, in spite of the reputation which attended him, had, from the first, felt disappointment with the celebrated abode of philosophy and literature; and seems to have given up the world from a conviction of its emptiness. "He," says Gregory, "according to the way of human nature, when, on suddenly falling in with what we hoped to be greater, we find it beneath its fame, experienced some such feeling, began to be sad, grew impatient, and could not congratulate himself on his place of residence. He sought an object which hope had drawn; and he called Athens 'hollow blessedness.'" Gregory himself, on the contrary, looked at things more cheerfully; as the succeeding sentences show. "Thus Basil; but I removed the greater part of his sorrow, meeting it with reason, and soothing it with reflections, and saying, what was the truth, that character is not at once understood, nor except by long time and perfect intimacy, nor are studies estimated by those who are submitted to them, on a brief trial and by slight evidence. Thus I re-assured him, and by continual trials of each other, I bound myself to him."—*Orat.*

20. Yet Gregory had inducements of his own to leave the world, not to insist on his love of Basil's company. His mother had devoted him to God, both before and after his birth ; and when he was a child he had a remarkable dream, which made a great impression upon him. "While I was asleep," he says in one of his poems, which runs thus in prose, "a dream came to me, which drew me readily to the desire of incorruptness. Two virgin forms, in white garments, seemed to shine close to me. Both were fair and of one age, and their ornament lay in their want of ornament, which is a woman's beauty. No gold adorned their neck, nor hyacinth ; nor had they the delicate spinning of the silkworm. Their fair robe was bound with a girdle, and it reached down to their ankles. Their head and face were concealed by a veil, and their eyes were fixed on the ground. The fair glow of modesty was on both of them, as far as could be seen under their thick covering. Their lips were closed in silence, as the rose in its dewy leaves. When I saw them, I rejoiced much; for I said that they were far more than mortals. And they in turn kept kissing me, who drew light from their lips, fondling me as a dear son. And when I asked who and whence the women were, the one answered, 'Purity,' the other, 'Sobriety;' 'We stand by Christ, the King, and delight in the beauty of the celestial virgins. Come, then, child, unite thy mind to our mind, thy light to our light ; so shall we carry thee aloft in all brightness through the air, and place thee by the radiance of the immortal Trinity.'"—*Carm.* 5. He goes on to say, that he never lost the impression

thus made upon him, as "a spark of heavenly fire," or "a taste of divine milk and honey."

As far, then, as these descriptions go, one might say that Gregory's abandonment of the world arose from an early passion, as it may be called, for a purity higher than his own nature; and Basil's from a profound sense of the world's nothingness and the world's defilements. Both seem to have viewed it as a sort of penitential exercise, as well as a means towards perfection.

When they had once resolved to devote themselves to the service of religion, the question arose, how they might best improve and employ the talents committed to them. Somehow, the idea of marrying and taking orders, or taking orders and marrying, building or improving their parsonage, and showing forth the charities, the humanities, and the gentilities of a family man, did not suggest itself to their minds. They fancied that they must give up wife, children, property, if they would be perfect; and this being taken for granted, that their choice did but lie between two modes of life, both of which they regarded as extreme. Here, then, for a time, they were in some perplexity. Gregory speaks of two ascetic disciplines, that of the solitary, and that of the secular[1]; one of which, he says, profits a man's self, the other his neighbour. Midway, however, between these lay the Cœnobite, or what we commonly call the monastic; removed from the world, yet acting in a certain select circle. And this was the rule which the friends at length determined to

[1] ἄζυγες and μιγάδες.

adopt, withdrawing from mixed society in order to be of the greater service to it.

The following is the passage in which Gregory describes the life which was the common choice of both of them:—

Fierce was the whirlwind of my storm-toss'd mind,
Searching, mid holiest ways, a holier still.
Long had I nerved me, in the depths to sink
Thoughts of the flesh, and then more strenuously.
Yet, while I gazed upon diviner aims,
I had not wit to single out the best:
For, as is aye the wont in things of earth,
Each had its evil, each its nobleness.
I was the pilgrim of a toilsome course,
Who had o'erpast the waves, and now look'd round,
With anxious eye, to track his road by land.
Then did the awful Tishbite's image rise,
His highest Carmel, and his food uncouth;
The Baptist wealthy in his solitude;
And the unencumbered sons of Jonadab.
But soon I felt the love of holy books,
The spirit beaming bright in learned lore,
Which deserts could not hear, nor silence tell.
Long was the inward strife, till ended thus:—
I saw, when men lived in the fretful world,
They vantaged other men, but wrong'd the while
Their own calm hearts, which straight by storms were tried.
They who retired held an uprighter port,
And raised their eyes with quiet strength towards God;
Yet served self only on moroser plan.
And so, 'twixt these and those, I struck my path,
To meditate with the free solitary,
Yet to live secular, and serve mankind.

Not many years passed after their leaving Athens, when Basil put his resolution into practice; and, having fixed upon Pontus for his retirement, wrote

to Gregory to remind him of his promise. Gregory hesitated. Then he wrote to expostulate with him. Gregory's answer was as follows:—

"I have not stood to my word, I own it; having protested, ever since Athens and our friendship and union of heart there, that I would be your companion, and follow a strict life with you. Yet I act against my wish, duty annulled by duty, the duty of friendship by the duty of filial reverence . . . . . However, I still shall be able to perform my promise in a measure, if you will accept thus much. I will come to you for a time, if, in turn, you will give me your company here; thus we shall be quits in friendly service, while we have all things common. And thus I shall avoid distressing my parents, without losing you."—*Ep.* 5.

When we bear in mind what has been already mentioned about Gregory's father, we may well believe that there really were very urgent reasons against the son leaving him, when it came to the point, over and above the ties which would keep him with a father and mother both advanced in years. Basil, however, was disappointed; and instead of retiring to Pontus, devoted a year to visiting the monastic institutions of Syria and Egypt, On his return, his thoughts again settled on his friend Gregory; and he attempted to overcome the obstacle in the way of their old project, by placing himself in a district called Tiberina, near Gregory's own home. Finding, however, the spot cold and damp, he gave up the idea of it. On one occasion, while he was yet living in Cæsarea, where for a time he had taught

rhetoric, Gregory wrote to him the following familiar letter, as from a countryman to an inhabitant of town, not without a glance at Basil's peculiarities :—

"You shall not charge Tiberina upon me, with its ice and bad weather; O, mudless, tip-toeing, capering man! O, feathered, flighty man, mounted on Abaris's arrow, who, Cappadocian though you be, shun Cappadocia! A vast injury it is, when you townspeople are sallow, and have not your breath full, and dole out the sun; and we are plump and in plenty, and have elbow-room! However, such is your condition; you are gentlemanlike, and wealthy, and a man of the world; I cannot praise it. Say not a word more, then, against our mud (you did not make the town, nor I the winter); if you do, I will match our wading with your trading[1], and all the wretched things which are found in cities." —*Ep.* 6.

Meanwhile Basil had chosen for his retreat, a spot near Neocæsarea, in Pontus, close by the village where lay his father's property, where he had been brought up in childhood by his grandmother Macrina, and whither his mother and sister had retired for a monastic life after his father's death. The river Iris ran between the two places. Within a mile of their monastery was the Church of the Forty Martyrs, where father, mother, and sister were successively buried. These Martyrs were a number of the victims of the persecution of Licinius at Sebaste; Emmelia, Basil's mother, had collected their remains, and he himself and his brother Gregory of Nyssa have left

[1] Ἀντὶ πηλῶν τοὺς καπήλους.

us homilies in celebration of them. Here, then, it was that St. Basil dwelt in holy retirement for five or six years. On settling there, he again wrote to Gregory :—

"My brother Gregory writes me word that he has long been wishing to be with me, and adds, that you are of the same mind; however, I could not wait, partly as being hard of belief, considering I have been so often disappointed, and partly because I find myself pulled all ways with business. I must at once make for Pontus, where, perhaps, God willing, I may make an end of wandering. After renouncing, with trouble, the idle hopes which I once had, or rather the dreams (for it is well said, that hopes are waking dreams), I departed into Pontus in quest of a place to live in. There God has opened on me a spot exactly answering to my taste, so that I actually see before my eyes what I have often pictured to my mind in idle fancy.

"There is a lofty mountain, covered with thick woods, watered towards the north with cool and transparent streams. A plain lies beneath, enriched by the waters which are ever draining off upon it; and skirted by a spontaneous profusion of trees almost thick enough to be a fence; so as even to surpass Calypso's Island, which Homer seems to have considered the most beautiful spot on earth. Indeed, it is like an island, inclosed as it is on all sides; for deep hollows cut off two sides of it; the river, which has lately fallen down a precipice, runs all along the front, and is impassable as a wall; while the mountain extending itself behind, and meeting the

hollows in a crescent, stops up the path at its roots. There is but one pass, and I am master of it. Behind my abode there is another gorge, rising into a ledge up above, so as to command the extent of the plain and the stream which bounds it, which is not less beautiful to my taste, than the Strymon, as seen from Amphipolis. For while the latter flows leisurely, and swells into a lake almost, and is too still to be a river, the former is the most rapid stream I know, and somewhat turbid, too, from the rocks just above; from which, shooting down, and eddying in a deep pool, it forms a most pleasant scene for myself or any one else; and is an inexhaustible resource to the country people, in the countless fish which its depths contain. What need to tell of the exhalations from the earth, or the breezes from the river? Another might admire the multitude of flowers, and singing-birds; but leisure I have none for such thoughts. However, the chief praise of the place is, that being happily disposed for produce of every kind, it nurtures what to me is the sweetest produce of all, quietness; indeed, it is not only rid of the bustle of the city, but is even unfrequented by travellers, except a chance hunter. It abounds indeed in game, as well as other things, but not, I am glad to say, in bears or wolves, such as you have, but in deer, and wild goats, and hares, and the like. Does it not strike you what a foolish mistake I was near making when I was eager to change this spot for your Tiberina, the very pit of the whole earth? Pardon me, then, if I am now set upon it; for not Alcmæon himself, I suppose, would endure to wander further when he had found the Echinades."—*Ep.* 14.

Gregory answered this letter by one which is still extant, in which he satirizes, point by point, the picture of the Pontine solitude which Basil had drawn to allure him, perhaps from distaste for it, perhaps in the temper of one who studiously disparages what, if he had admitted the thought, might prove too great a temptation to him. He ends thus: "This is longer, perhaps, than a letter, but shorter than a comedy. For yourself, it will be good of you to take this castigation well; but if you do not, I will give you some more of it."—*Ep.* 7. Basil *did* take it well; but this did not save him from the infliction of the concluding threat; for Gregory, after paying him a visit, continues in the same bantering strain in a later epistle.

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"Since you take my castigation well, I will now give you more of it; and, to set off with Homer, let us

'Pass on, and sing thy garniture within,'

to wit, the dwelling without roof and without door,—the hearth without fire and smoke,—walls, however, baked enough, lest the mud should trickle on us, while we suffer Tantalus's penalty, thirst amid wet;—that sad and hungry banquet, for which you called me from Cappadocia, not as for the frugal fare of the Lotophagi, but as if for Alcinous's board for one lately shipwrecked and wretched. I have remembrance of the bread and of the broth—so they were named—and shall remember them: how my teeth got stuck in your hunches, and next lifted and heaved themselves as out of paste. You, indeed,

will set it out in tragic style yourself, taking a sublime tone from your own sufferings. But for me, unless that true lady Bountiful, your mother, had rescued me quickly, showing herself in need, like a haven to the tempest-tossed, I had been dead long ago, getting myself little honour, but much pity, from Pontic hospitality. How shall I omit those ungardenlike gardens, void of pot-herbs? or the Augean store, which we cleared out and spread over them; what time we worked the hillside plough, vine-planter I, and awful you, with this neck and hands, which still bear the marks of the toil (O earth and sun, air and virtue! for I will tragicize a bit), not the Hellespont to yoke, but to level the steep. If you are not annoyed at this description, nor am I; but if you are, much more I at the reality. Yet I pass over the greater part, for tender remembrance of those other many things which I have shared with you." —*Ep.* 8.

This certainly is not a picture of comfort; and curiously contrasts with Basil's romantic view of the same things. But for the following letter, one could fancy that it was too much even for Gregory; but on Basil seeming to be hurt, he wrote thus:—

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"What I wrote before, concerning your Pontic abode, was in jest, not in earnest; but now I write very much in earnest. 'Who shall make me, as in months past, as in the days' when I had the luxury of suffering hardship with you? since voluntary pain is higher than involuntary comfort. Who shall

restore me to those psalmodies, and vigils, and departures to God through prayer, and that (as it were) immaterial and incorporeal life? or to that union of brethren, in nature and soul, who are made gods by you, and carried on high? or to that rivalry in virtue and sharpening of heart which we consigned to written decrees and canons? or to that loving study of divine oracles, and the light we found in them, with the guidance of the Spirit? or, to speak of lesser and lower things, to the bodily labours of the day, the wood-drawing and the stone-hewing, the planting and the draining? or that golden plane, more honourable than that of Xerxes, under which, not a jaded king, but a weary monk did sit?—planted by me, watered by Apollos, (that is, your honourable self,) increased by God, unto my honour; that there should be preserved with you a memorial of my loving toil, as Aaron's rod that budded was, as Scripture says and we believe, kept in the ark. It is very easy to wish all this, not easy to gain. Do you, however, come to me, and revive my virtue, and work with me; and whatever benefit we once gained together, preserve for me by your prayers, lest otherwise I fade away by little and little, as a shadow, while the day declines. For you are my breath, more than the air, and so far only do I live, as I am in your company, either present, or, if absent, by your image."—*Ep.* 9.

From this letter it appears that Basil had made up for Gregory's absence by collecting a brotherhood around him, in which he had such success that he is considered the founder of the monastic, that is, the

cœnobitic discipline in Pontus,—a discipline to which the Church gave her sanction as soon as the conversion of the temporal power, by bestowing upon her prosperity for persecution, had increased the reasons for asceticism, and increasing its professors, had created the necessity of order and method among them. The following letter, written at the time of the foregoing letters of Gregory, gives us some insight into the nature of his rule, and the motives and feelings which influenced him: it is too long to do more than extract portions of it.

BASIL TO GREGORY.

"Your letter brought you before me, just as one recognizes a friend in his children. It is just like you, to tell me it was little to describe the place without mentioning my habits and method of life, if I wished to make you desirous to join me; it was worthy of a soul which counts all things of earth as nothing, compared with that blessedness which the promises reserve for us. Yet really I am ashamed to tell you how I pass night and day in this lonely nook. Though I have left the city's haunts, as the source of innumerable ills, yet I have not yet learned to leave myself. I am like a man who, on account of sea-sickness, is angry with the size of his vessel as tossing overmuch, and leaves it for the pinnace or boat, and is sea-sick and miserable still, as carrying his delicacy of stomach along with him. So I have got no great good from this retirement. However, what follows is an account of what I proposed to do, with a view of tracking the footsteps of Him

who is our guide unto salvation, and who has said, 'If any one will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.'

"We must strive after a quiet mind. As well might the eye ascertain an object put before it, while it is wandering restless up and down, and sideways, without fixing a steady gaze upon it, as a mind, distracted by a thousand worldly cares, be able clearly to apprehend the truth. He who is not yet yoked in the bonds of matrimony, is harassed by frenzied cravings, and rebellious impulses, and hopeless attachments; he who has found his mate is encompassed with his own tumult of cares: if he is childless, there is desire of children; has he children, anxiety about their education; attention to his wife, care of his house, oversight of his servants, misfortunes in trade, quarrels with his neighbours, lawsuits, the risks of the merchant, the toil of the farmer. Each day, as it comes, darkens the soul in its own way; and night after night takes up the day's anxieties, and cheats the mind with illusions in accordance. Now one way of escaping all this is separation from the whole world; that is, not bodily separation, but the severance of the soul's sympathy with the body, and to live so without city, home, goods, society, possessions, means of life, business, engagements, human learning, that the heart may readily receive every impress of divine doctrine. Preparation of heart is the unlearning the prejudices of evil converse. It is the smoothing the waxen tablet before attempting to write on it. Now solitude is of the greatest use for this purpose, inasmuch as it stills our passions, and gives room for

principle to cut them out of the soul. Let there, then, be a place such as ours, separate from intercourse with men, that the tenour of our exercises be not interrupted from without. Pious exercises nourish the soul with divine thoughts. What state can be more blessed than to imitate on earth the choruses of Angels?—to begin the day with prayer, and honour our Maker with hymns and songs?—as the day brightens, to betake ourselves, with prayer attending on it throughout, to our labours, and to sweeten our work with hymns, as if with salt? Soothing hymns compose the mind to a cheerful and calm state. Quiet, then, as I have said, is the first step in our sanctification; the tongue purified from the gossip of the world; the eyes unexcited by fair colour or comely shape; the ear not relaxing the tone of mind by voluptuous songs, nor by that especial mischief, the talk of light men and jesters. Thus the mind, saved from dissipation from without, nor, through the senses, thrown upon the world, falls back upon itself, and thereby ascends to the contemplation of God.

"The study of inspired Scripture is the chief way of finding our duty; for in it we find both instruction about conduct, and the lives of blessed men delivered in writing, as some breathing images of godly living, for the imitation of their good works. Hence, in whatever respect each one feels himself deficient, devoting himself to this imitation, he finds, as from some dispensary, the due medicine for his ailment. He who is enamoured of chastity, dwells upon the history of Joseph, and from him learns chaste actions, finding him not only possessed of self-com-

mand over pleasure, but virtuously-minded in habit. He is taught endurance from Job. Or, should he be inquiring how to be at once meek and great-hearted, hearty against sin, meek towards men, he will find David noble in warlike exploits, meek and unruffled as regards revenge on enemies. Such, too, was Moses, rising up with great heart upon sinners against God, but with meek soul bearing their evil speaking against himself.

"This, too, is a very principal point to attend to,—knowledge how to converse; to interrogate without over-earnestness; to answer without desire of display; not to interrupt a profitable speaker, or to desire ambitiously to put in a word of one's own; to be measured in speaking and hearing; not to be ashamed of receiving, or to be grudging in giving, information, nor to pass another's knowledge for one's own, as depraved women their supposititious children, but to refer it candidly to the true parent. The middle tone of voice is best, neither so low as to be inaudible, nor ill-bred from its high pitch. One should reflect first what one is going to say, and then give it utterance; be courteous when addressed, amiable in social intercourse; not aiming to be pleasant by facetiousness, but cultivating gentleness in kind admonitions. Harshness is ever to be put aside, even in censuring."—*Ep.* 2.

These last remarks are curious, considering the account which, as we have seen, Gregory has left us of Basil's own manner. In another epistle, of an apologetic character, he thus speaks of the devotional exercises of his monastery:—

"Our people rise while it is yet night, for the house

of prayer; and after confessing to God, in distress and affliction and continued tears, they rise up and turn to psalm-singing. And now, being divided into two, they respond to each other, thereby deepening their study of the holy oracles, and securing withal attention of heart without wandering. Next, letting one lead the chant, the rest follow him; and thus, with variety of psalmody, spending the night, with prayers interspersed; when day begins to dawn, all in common, as from one mouth and one heart, lift up to the Lord the psalm of confession, each making the words of repentance his own."—*Ep.* 207.

Such was Basil's life till he was called to the priesthood, which led to his leaving his retirement for Cæsarea;—by night, prayer; by day, manual labour, theological study, and mercy to the poor.

The next kindly intercourse between Basil and Gregory took place on occasion of the difference between Basil and his bishop, Eusebius; when, as has been already related, Gregory interfered successfully to reconcile them. And the next arose out of circumstances which followed the death of Gregory's brother, Cæsarius. On his death-bed he had left all his goods to the poor; a bequest which was interfered with, first, by servants and others about him, who carried off at once all the valuables on which they could lay hands; and, after Gregory had come into possession of the residue, by the fraud of certain pretended creditors, who appealed to the law on his refusing to satisfy them. Basil, on this occasion, gained him the interest of the Prefect of Constantinople, and another, whose influence was great at court.

We now come to the election of Basil to the Exarchate of Cappadocia, which was owing in no small degree to the exertions of Gregory and his father in his favour. This event, which was attended with considerable hazard of defeat from the strength of the civil party, and an episcopal faction opposed to Basil, doubtless was at the moment a cause of increased affection between the friends, though it was soon the occasion of the difference and coolness which I spoke of in the beginning of this chapter. Gregory, as I have said, was of an amiable temper, fond of retirement and literary pursuits, and cultivating Christianity in its domestic and friendly aspect, rather than amid the toils of ecclesiastical warfare. I have also said enough to show that I have no thoughts whatever of accusing him of any approach to self-indulgence; and his subsequent conduct at Constantinople made it clear how well he could undergo and fight up against persecution in the quarrel of the Gospel. But such scenes of commotion were real sufferings to him, even independently of the personal danger of them; he was unequal to the task of ruling, and Basil in vain endeavoured to engage him as his coadjutor and comrade in the government of his exarchate. Let the following letter of Gregory explain his feelings:—

GREGORY TO BASIL.

"I own I was delighted to find you seated on the high throne, and to see the victory of the Spirit, in lifting up a light upon its candlestick, which even before did not shine dimly. Could I be otherwise, seeing the general interests of the Church so de-

pressed, and needing a guiding hand like yours? However, I did not hasten to you at once, nor will I; you must not ask it of me. First, I did not, from delicacy towards your own character, that you might not seem to be collecting your partizans about you with indecency and heat, as objectors would say; next, for my own peace and reputation. Perhaps you will say, 'When, then, will you come, and till when will you delay?' till God bids, till the shadows of opposition and jealousy are passed. And I am confident it cannot be long before the blind and the lame give way, who shut out David from Jerusalem." —*Ep.* 24.

At length Gregory came to Cæsarea, where Basil showed him all marks of affection and respect: and when Gregory declined any public attentions, from a fear of the jealousy it might occasion, his friend let him do as he would, regardless, as Gregory observes, of the charge which might fall on himself, of neglecting Gregory, from those who were ignorant of the circumstances. However, Basil could not detain him long in the metropolitan city, as the following letter shows, which was written on occasion of a charge of heterodoxy being advanced against the archbishop by a monk of Nazianzus, which Gregory had publicly and indignantly opposed, but had written to him for a clearer explanation from himself. Basil was much hurt to find he had any thing to explain to Gregory. He answers:—

"I have received the letter of your religiousness, by the most reverend brother Hellenius; and what you have intimated, he has told me in plain terms. How I felt on hearing it, you cannot doubt at all.

However, since I have determined that my affection for you shall outweigh my pain, whatever it is, I have accepted it as I ought to do, and I pray the Holy God, that my remaining days or hours may be as carefully conducted in their disposition towards you, as they have been in past time, during which, my conscience tells me, I have been wanting to you in nothing, small or great." After saying that his life was a practical refutation of the calumny, that a brief letter would not do what years had failed in doing, and hinting that the matter ought never to have been brought before him, and that they who listen to tales against others will have tales told of themselves, he continues :—

" I know what has led to all this, and have urged every topic to hinder it ; but now I am sick of the subject, and will say no more about it,—I mean our little intercourse. For had we kept our old promise to each other, and had due regard to the claims which the churches have on us, we should have been the greater part of the year together ; and then there would have been no opening for these calumniators. Pray have nothing to say to them ; let me persuade you to come here and assist me in my labours, particularly in my contest with the individual who is now assailing me. Your very appearance would have the effect of stopping him ; directly you show these disturbers of our home that you will, by God's blessing, place yourself at the head of our party, you will break up their cabal, and you will ' shut every unjust mouth that speaketh unrighteousness against God.' And thus facts will show who are your followers in good, and who are the halters and

cowardly betrayers of the word of truth. If, however, the Church be betrayed, why then I shall care little to set men right about myself by means of words, who account of me as men would naturally account who have not yet learned to measure themselves. Perhaps, in a short time, by God's grace, I shall be able to refute their slanders by very deed, for it seems likely that I shall have soon to suffer somewhat for the truth's sake more than usual; the best I can expect is banishment. Or, if this hope fails, after all Christ's judgment-seat is not far distant."—*Ep.* 71.

About two years after Basil's elevation, a dispute arose between him and Anthimus, Bishop of Tyana. Cappadocia had been divided by the civil power into two parts; and Anthimus contended that an ecclesiastical division must necessarily follow the civil, and that, in consequence, he himself, as holding the chief see in the second Cappadocia, was the rightful metropolitan of that province. The justice of the case was with Basil, but he was opposed by the party of bishops who were secretly Arianizers, and had already opposed themselves to his election. Accordingly, having might on his side, Anthimus began to alienate the monks from Basil, to appropriate the revenues of the Church of Cæsarea, which lay in his province, and to expel or gain over the presbyters, giving, as an excuse, that respect and offerings ought not to be paid to heterodox persons.

Gregory at once offered his assistance to his friend, hinting to him, at the same time, that some of those about him had some share of blame in the dispute. It happened unfortunately for their inti-

macy that they were respectively connected with distinct parties in the Church. Basil knew and valued, and gained over many of the Semi-Arians, who dissented from the orthodox doctrine more from over-subtlety, or want of clearness of mind, than from unbelief. Gregory was in habits of intimacy with the religious brethren of Nazianzus, his father's see, and these were eager for orthodoxy, almost as a badge of party. In the letter last cited, Basil reflects upon these monks; and, on this occasion, Gregory warned him against Eustathius and his friends, whose orthodoxy was suspicious, and who, being ill-disposed towards Anthimus, were likely to increase the difference between the latter and Basil. It may be observed that it was this connexion between Basil and Eustathius, to which Anthimus alluded, when he objected to pay offerings to the heterodox.

Gregory's offer of assistance to Basil was frankly made, and seems to have been as frankly accepted. "I will come, if you wish me," he had said, "if so be, to advise with you, if the sea wants water, or you a counsellor; at all events, to gain benefit, and to act the philosopher, by bearing ill-usage in your company."—*Ep.* 25. Accordingly, they set out together for Mount Taurus, in the second Cappadocia, where there was an estate or Church dedicated to St. Orestes, the property of the see of Cæsarea. On their return with the produce of the farm, they were encountered by the retainers of Anthimus, who blocked up the pass, and attacked their company. This warfare between Christian bishops was obviously a great scandal to the Church,

and Basil adopted a measure which he considered would put an end to it. He increased the number of bishopricks in that district, considering that residents might be able to secure the produce of the estate without disturbance, and to quiet and gain over the minds of those who had encouraged Anthimus in his opposition. Sasima was a village in this neighbourhood, and here he determined to place his friend Gregory, doubtless considering that he could not show him a greater mark of confidence than to commit to him the management of the quarrel, or confer on him a post, to his own high spirit more desirable, than the place of risk and responsibility.

Gregory had been unwilling even to be made a priest; but he shrunk with fear from the office of a bishop. He had on his mind that overpowering sense of the awfulness of the ministerial commission which then prevailed in more serious minds. "I feel myself to be unequal to this warfare," he had said on his ordination, "and therefore have hid my face, and slunk away. And I sought to sit down in solitude, being filled with bitterness, and to keep silence, from a conviction that the days were evil, since God's beloved have kicked against the truth, and we have become revolting children. And besides this, there is the eternal warfare with one's passions, which my body of humiliation wages with me night and day, part hidden, part open;—and the tossing to and fro and whirling through the senses and the delights of life; and the deep mire in which I stick fast; and the law of sin warring against the law of the spirit, and striving to efface the royal

image in us, and whatever of a divine effluence has been vested in us. Before one has subdued with all one's might the principle which drags one down, and has cleansed the mind duly, and has surpassed others much in approach to God, I consider it unsafe either to undertake cure of souls, or mediatorship between God and man, for some such thing is a priest."—*Or.* 1. With these admirable feelings the weakness of man mingled itself: at the urgent command of his father he submitted to be consecrated; but the reluctance which he had felt to undertake the office was now transferred to his occupying the see to which he had been appointed. An ascetic, like Gregory, ought not to have complained of the country as deficient in beauty and interest, even though he might be allowed to feel the responsibility of a situation which made him a neighbour of Anthimus. Yet such was his infirmity; and he repelled the accusations of his mind against himself by charging Basil with unkindness in placing him at Sasima. On the other hand, it is possible that Basil, in his eagerness for the settlement of his exarchate, too little consulted the character and taste of Gregory; and, above all, the feelings of duty which bound him to Nazianzus. This is the latter's account of the matter, in a letter which displays much heat, and even resentment, against Basil:—"Give me," he says, "peace and quiet above all things. Why should I be fighting for sucklings and birds, which are not mine, as if in a matter of souls and church rules? Well, play the man, be strong, turn every thing to your own glory, as rivers suck up the mountain rill, thinking little of friendship or

intimacy, compared with high aims and piety, and disregarding what the world will think of you for all this, being the property of the Spirit alone; while, on my part, so much shall I gain from this your friendship, not to trust in friends, nor to put any thing above God."—*Ep.* 31.

In the beginning of the same letter, he throws the blame upon Basil's episcopal throne, which suddenly made him higher than himself. Elsewhere he accuses him of ambition, and desire of aggrandizing himself. Basil, on the other hand, seems to have accused him of indolence and want of spirit.

Such was the melancholy crisis of an estrangement which had been for some time in preparation. Henceforth no letters, which are preserved, passed between the two friends; and but one act of intercourse is discoverable in their history. That exception indeed is one of much interest: Basil went to see Gregory at Nazianzus in 374 on the death of Gregory's father. But this was only like a sudden gleam, as if to show that they were "walking in the light," and in that unseen "fellowship one with another" which is justification and peace; and scarcely mitigates the sorrowful catastrophe, as we are viewing it. Anthimus appointed a rival bishop to Sasima; and Gregory, refusing to contest the see with him, returned to Nazianzus. Basil laboured by himself. Gregory retained his feeling of Basil's unkindness even after his death; though he revered and admired him not less, or even more than before; and attributed his conduct to a sense of duty. In his commemorative oration, after praising his erection of new sees, he says, "Into this measure I myself was brought in

by the way. I do not seem bound to use a soft phrase. For admiring as I do all he did, more than I can say, this one thing I cannot praise, for I will confess my feeling, which is in other ways not unknown to the world, his extraordinary and unfriendly conduct towards me, of which time has not removed the pain. For to this I trace all the irregularity and confusion of my life, and my not being able, or not seeming, to command my feelings, though the latter of the two is a small matter; unless, indeed, I may be suffered to make this excuse for him, that, having views beyond this earth, and having departed hence even before life was over, he viewed every thing as the Spirit's; and knowing how to reverence friendship, then only slighted it, when it was a duty to prefer God, and to make more account of the things hoped for, than things perishable."—*Orat.* 20.

This lamentable occurrence took place eight or nine years before Basil's death; he had, before and after it, many trials, many sorrows; but this probably was the greatest of all.

CHAPTER IX.

RISE AND FALL OF GREGORY.

"O, that I had in the wilderness a lodging-place of wayfaring men, that I might leave my people and go from them; for they be all adulterers, an assembly of treacherous men."

"THIS, O Basil, to thee, from me,"—thus Gregory winds up his sermon upon Basil,—"this offering to thee from a tongue once most dear to thee! thy fellow in honour and in age! If it be near thy worth, it is thy favour; for, encouraged by thee, I have set about this oration upon thee. But if it be far from, and much beside my hope, what is to be expected from one worn down with years, sickness, and regret for thee? However, the best we can, is acceptable to God. But O, that thou, divine and sacred heart, mayest watch over me from above, and that thorn in my flesh, which God has given for my discipline, either end it by thy intercessions, or persuade me to bear it bravely! and mayest thou direct my whole life, even to the end, towards that which is most convenient! and if I depart hence, then mayest thou receive me there in thy tabernacles!"—*Ep.* 20. The English Church has removed such addresses from her services, on account of the abuses to which they have led; and she pointedly condemns what she calls, the Romish doctrine concerning Invocation of Saints, as "a fond thing:" however Gregory, not

knowing what would come after his day, thus expressed the yearnings of his heart, and, as we may almost suppose, at the time he thus made them public, had already received an answer to them. He delivered the discourse from which I have been quoting, on his return to Cæsarea from Constantinople, three years after St. Basil's death; an eventful three years, in which he had been quite a different man from what he was before, though it was all past and over now, and about to be succeeded by a return to the retirement in which Basil's death found him.

Gregory disliked the routine intercourse of life; he disliked ecclesiastical business, he disliked publicity, he disliked strife, he felt his own manifold imperfections, he feared to disgrace his profession, and to lose his hope; he loved the independence of solitude, the tranquillity of private life; leisure for meditation, reflection, self-government, study, and literature. He admired, yet he playfully satirized, Basil's romantic views and lofty efforts. Yet, upon Basil's death, Basil's spirit, as it were, came into him; and within four months of it, he had become a preacher of the orthodox faith in an heretical metropolis, had formed a congregation, had set apart a place of worship, and had been stoned by the populace. Was it Gregory, or was it Basil, that blew the trumpet in Constantinople, and waged a successful war in the very seat of the enemy, in despite of all fluctuations of mind, misgivings, fastidiousness, disgust with self, and love of quiet? Such was the power of the great Basil, triumphing in his death, though failing up to it. Within four or five years of it, all the objects were either realized, or in the way to be

realized, which he had in vain attempted, and sadly waited for. His eyes had failed in longing; they waited for the morning, and death closed them ere it came. He died on the 1st of January, 379; on the 19th of the same month Theodosius was invested with the imperial purple; by the 20th of April, Gregory had formed a Church in Constantinople; in February, in the following year, Theodosius declared for the Church; in November he restored the Churches of Constantinople to the Catholics. In the next May he convoked, in that city, the second General Council, which issued in the pacification of the Eastern Church, the overthrow of the great heresy which troubled it, and in a measure and in prospect its union with the West. "Pretiosa in conspectu Domini mors sanctorum ejus."

Under such circumstances it was, when he had passed through many things, and done a great work, when he, a recluse hitherto, had all at once been preacher, confessor, metropolitan, president of a General Council, and now was come back again to Asia as plain Gregory—to be what he had been before, to meditate and to do penance, and to read, and to write poems, and to be silent, as in former years, except that he was now lonely,—his friend dead, his father dead, mother dead, brother Cæsarius, sister Gorgonia dead, and himself dead in this world, though still to live in the flesh for some eight dreary years,—in such a time and in such a place, at Cæsarea, the scene of Basil's labours, he made the oration, which the above invocation terminates; and he closed it thus:—

"And when I depart hence, mayest thou receive

me into thy tabernacles, so that living together with one another, and beholding together more clearly and more perfectly the holy and Blessed Trinity, whose vision we now receive in poor glimpses, we may there end all our desires, the reward of the warfare which we have waged, which we have endured! To thee, then, these words from me; but me who is there to praise, leaving life after thee? even should I do ought praiseworthy, in Christ Jesus our Lord, to whom be glory for ever.—Amen."

The circumstances which brought Gregory to Constantinople were as follow:—It was now about forty years since the Church of Constantinople enjoyed the blessing of orthodox teaching and worship. Paul, who had been elected bishop at the beginning of this period, had been visited with four successive banishments from the Arian party, and at length with martyrdom. He had been superseded, first, by Eusebius, the leader of the Arians; then by Macedonius, the head of the sect which denied the divinity of the Holy Spirit; and then by Eudoxius, the Arianizer of the Gothic tribes. On the death of the last mentioned, A.D. 370, the remnant of the orthodox elected for their bishop, Evagrius, who was immediately banished by the emperor Valens; and, when they petitioned him to reverse his decision, eighty of their ecclesiastics, who were the bearers of their complaints, were subjected to a sentence severer even than our celebrated *præmunire*, being burned at sea in the ship in which they were embarked. In the year 379, the orthodox Theodosius succeeded to the empire of the East; but this event

did not at once alter the fortunes of the Church in his metropolis. The body of the people, nay, the populace itself, and, what is stranger, numbers of the female population, were eagerly attached to Arianism, and menaced violence to any who was bold enough to preach the true doctriue. Such was the calamitous state of the Church itself; in addition to which must be added, the attitude of its external enemies :—the Novatians, who, orthodox themselves in doctrine, yet possessed a schismatical episcopacy, and a number of places of worship in the city;—the Eunomians, professors of the Arian heresy in its most undisguised blasphemy, who also had established a bishop there ;—and the Semi-Arians and Apollinarists, whose heretical sentiments have been, or will be hereafter, alluded to. This was the condition of Constantinople when the orthodox members of its Church, under the sanction and with the co-operation of the neighbouring bishops, invited Gregory, whose gifts, religious and intellectual, were well known to them, to preside over it, instead of the heretical Demophilus, whom Valens, three years before, had placed there.

The history of Gregory's doings and fortunes at Constantinople may be told in a few words. A place of worship was prepared for him by the kindness of a relative. There he began to preach the true doctrine—first, amid the contempt, then amid the rage and hatred of the Arian population. His congregation increased ; he was stoned by the multitude, and brought before the civil authorities on the charge of creating a riot. At length, however, on Theodosius

visiting the capital, he was recognized as bishop, and established in the temporalities of the see. However, on the continued opposition of the people, and vexatious combinations against him on the part of his brother bishops, he resigned his episcopate during the session of the second General Council, and retired to Asia Minor.

I do not intend to say more upon St. Gregory's public career; but before leaving the subject, I am tempted to make two reflections.

First, he was fifty years old when he was called to Constantinople; a consolatory thought to those who see their span of life crumbling away under their feet, and they apparently doing nothing. Gregory was nothing till he was almost an old man; had he died at Basil's age, he would have died nothing. He seems to have been exactly the same age as Basil; but Basil had done his work, and was taken away before he began his.

The second reflection that suggests itself is this: in what a little time men move through the work which is, as it were, the end for which they are born, and which is to give a character to their names with posterity. They are known in history as the prime movers in this, or the instruments of that; as rulers, or politicians, or philosophers, or warriors; and when we examine dates, we often find that the exploits, or discoveries, or sway which make them famous, lasted but a few years out of a long life, like plants that bloom once, and never again. Their energy of existence, moral character, talents, acquirements, seems concentrated upon a crisis, and is

invisible and silent in the world's annals, both before and after. Gregory lived sixty years; his ecclesiastical life was barely three.

When, leaving Gregory's public, we turn to his personal character, we have before us a man of warm affections, amiable disposition, and innocent life. As a son, full of piety, tenderness, and watchful solicitude; as a friend or companion, lively, cheerful, and open-hearted; overflowing with natural feelings, and easy in the expression of them; simple, good, humble, primitive. His aspirations were high, as became a saint, his life ascetic in the extreme, and his conscience still more sensitive of sin and infirmity. At the same time he was subject to alternations of feeling; was deficient all along in strength of mind and self-control; and was harassed, even in his old age, by irritability, fear, and other passions, which one would think that even years, not to say self-discipline, would have brought into subjection. These are some of the conspicuous points in Gregory's character; and the following extracts from his writings, in verse and prose, are intended in some measure to illustrate them.

At first sight, many persons may feel surprised at the rhetorical style of his sermons, or orations, as they are more fitly called: the following passage explains this. He considered he had gained at Athens, while yet in the world, a rare talent, the science of thought and speech; and he considered that what had cost him so much, should not be renounced, but consecrated to religious uses. "This I offer to God," he says, "this I dedicate, which alone I have left myself, in which only I am rich. For all other

things I have surrendered to the commandment and the Spirit, and have exchanged for the all-precious pearl whatever I had, and have become, or rather long to become, a great merchant, buying things great and imperishable with what is small and will certainly decay. Discourse alone I retain, as being the servant of the Word, nor should I ever willingly neglect this possession; rather I honour and embrace and take more pleasure in it than in all other things in which the many take pleasure; and I make it my life's companion, and good counsellor, and associate, and guide heavenward, and ready comrade. I have said to wisdom, 'Thou art my sister.' With this I bridle my impetuous anger, with this I appease wasting envy, with this I lull to rest sorrow, the chain of the heart; with this I sober the flood of pleasure, with this I put a measure, not on friendship, but on dislike. This makes me temperate in good fortune, and high-souled in poverty; this encourages me to run with the prosperous traveller, to stretch a hand to the falling, to be weak with the weak, and to be merry with the strong. With this, home and foreign land are all one to me, and change of places, which are foreign to me equally, and not mine own. This discriminates for me between two worlds, withdraws me from one, joins me to the other."—*Orat.* 12.

When he was ordained priest, he betook himself in haste to Pontus, and only after a time returned to Nazianzus. He thus speaks of this proceeding:—

"The chief cause was my surprise at the unexpected event; as they who are astounded by sudden noises, I did not retain my power of reflection, and

therefore I offended against modesty, which I had cherished my whole time. Next, a certain love insinuated itself, of the moral beauty of quiet, and of retirement, of which whereas I had been enamoured from the beginning, more perhaps than any who have studied letters, and had vowed to God in the greatest and most severe of dangers, nay, had even reached so far as to be in the threshold, I did not endure being tyrannized over, and being thrust into the midst of tumult, and dragged forcibly away from this mode of life, as if from some sacred asylum. For nothing seemed to me so great, as by closing the senses, and being rid of flesh and world, and retiring upon one's self, and touching nothing human, except when absolutely necessary, and conversing with one's self and God, to live above things visible, and to bear the divine vision always clear within one, pure from the shifting impressions of earth,—a true mirror unsullied, of God and the things of God, now and ever, adding light to light, the brighter to the dimmer, gathering in hope even now the blessedness of the world to come,—and to associate with Angels, being still on earth, leaving the earth and raised aloft by the spirit. Whoso of you is smitten with this love, knows what I say, and will be indulgent to my then feeling."—*Orat.* 1.

He professes that he could not bring himself to make a great risk, and to venture ambitiously, but preferred to be safe and sure. "Who is there when he has not yet devoted himself and learned to receive God's hidden wisdom in mystery, being yet a babe, yet fed on milk, yet unnumbered in Israel, yet unenlisted in God's army, yet unable to take up

Christ's Cross as a man, not yet an honoured member of Him at all, who would in spite of this submit with joy and readiness to be placed at the head of Christ's fulness[1]? No one, if I am to be his counsellor; for this is the greatest of alarms, this the extreme of dangers, to every one who understands the preciousness of success, and the ruin which attends on failure. Let another sail for traffick, so I said, and cross the expanse of ocean, and keep constant company with winds and waves, to gain much, if so be, and to risk much. This may suit a man apt in sailing, apt in trafficking; but what I prefer is to remain on land, to plough a small glebe and a dear one, to pay distant compliments to lucre and the sea, and thus to live, as I may be able, with a small and scanty loaf, and to lead on a life safe and surgeless, not to risk a vast and mighty danger for mighty gains. To a lofty mind, indeed, it is a penalty not to attempt great things, not to exercise his powers upon many persons, but to abide in what is small, as if lighting a small house with a great light, or covering a child's body with a youth's armour; but to the small it is safety to carry a small burden, not, by undertaking things beyond his powers, both to incur ridicule and a risk; just as to build a tower becomes him only who has wherewith to finish."—*Orat.* 1.

It is notorious that the gentle and humble-minded Gregory proved himself unequal to the government of the Church and province of Constantinople, which were as unworthy as they were impatient of him.

[1] Vide Eph. i. 23.

Charges of his incompetency formed part of the ground on which a successful opposition was made to him in the second General Council. What notions, however, his enemies had of fitness, is plain, from the following extract. The truth is, Gregory was in no sense what is called, rightly or wrongly, a party man; and while he was deficient, perhaps, in the sagacity, keenness, vigour, and decision for which a public man too often incurs the reproach of that name, he also had that kindness of heart, dispassionateness, and placability, which more justly avail to rescue a person from it. It was imputed to him that he was not severe enough with his fallen persecutors. He thus replies:—

"Consider what is charged against me. 'So much time is passed,' they say, 'of your governing the Church, with the crisis in your favour, and the emperor's influence, so great a thing. What symptom of the change is there? How many persecutors had we before! what misery did we not suffer! what insults, what threats, what exiles, what plunderings, what confiscations, what burnings of our clergy at sea, what temples profaned with blood of saints, and for temples made charnel-houses! What has followed! We have become stronger than our persecutors, and they have escaped!' So it is. For me it is enough of vengeance upon our injurers, to have the power of retaliation. But these objectors think otherwise: for they are very precise and righteous in the matter of reprisals, and therefore they claim what belongs to the opportunity. 'What prefect,' they ask, 'has been punished? or populace brought to their senses? or incendiaries? what fear of our-

selves have we secured to us for the time to come?' " —*Orat.* 32.

Gregory had by far too little pomp and pretence to satisfy a luxurious and fastidious city. They wanted "a king like the nations;" a man who had a presence, who would figure and parade and rustle in silk, and hold forth and lay down the law, and be what is thought dignified and grand; whereas they had no one but "poor, dear, good Gregory," a monk of Nazianzus, a personage, who, in spite of his acknowledged eloquence, was but a child, had no knowledge of the world, no manners, no conversation, and no address; who was flurried and put out in high society, and who would have been singularly ill-adapted to keep a modern vestry in order. "Perhaps, too," he continues, "they may cast this slur upon me, as indeed they have, that I do not keep a good table, nor dress respectably; and that there is a want of style when I go abroad, and a want of pomp when people address me. Certainly, I forgot that I had to rival consuls and prefects and illustrious commanders, who have more wealth than they know where to squander. If all this is heinous, it has slipped my mind; forgive me this wrong; choose a ruler instead of me, who will please the many; restore me to solitude, to rusticity, and to God, whom only I shall please, though in my narrow circumstances."

And shortly before, "This is my character: I do not concur in many points with the many; I cannot persuade myself to walk their pace; this may be rudeness and awkwardness, but still it is my character. What to others are pleasures, annoy me; and

what I am pleased with, annoys others. Indeed, it would not surprise me, even were I put into confinement as a nuisance, and considered to be without common wits by the multitude, as is said to have happened to a Greek philosopher, whose good sense was accused of being derangement, because he made jest of all things, seeing that the serious objects of the many were really ridiculous ; or if I were accounted full of new wine, as Christ's disciples from their speaking with tongues, the power of the Spirit being mistaken in them for excitement of mind."—*Ibid.*

He has a similar passage, written after his resignation, in verse, which must here be unworthily exhibited in prose. "This good," he says, "alone will be free, and secure from restraint or capture,—a mind raised up to Christ. No more shall I be entertained by mortal prince, as heretofore ; I, Gregory, to pack a few comforts in me, set down in the midst, bashful and speechless, not breathing freely, feasting like a slave. No magistrate shall punish me with a certain seat, or a certain neighbour, giving its due place to a grovelling spirit. No more shall I clasp blood-stained hands, or take hold of beard, to gain some small favour. Nor hurrying with a crowd to sacred feast of birthday, burial, or marriage, shall I seize on all I can, some for my jaws, and some for attendants with their greedy palms, like Briareus's ; and then carrying myself off, a breathing grave, late in the evening, drag along homeward my ailing carcase, worn out, panting with satiety, yet hastening to another fat feast, before I have shaken off the

former infliction."—*Carm.* 10. One who is used to bread and water is overset by even a family dinner; much less could Gregory bear a city feast or conservative banquet.

When he had retired back to Asia, first he had stayed for a time at Nazianzus; thence he went to Arianzus, the place of his birth. Here he passed the whole of Lent, without speaking, with a view of gaining command over his tongue, in which, as in other respects, he painfully felt his existing deficiency. He writes the following notes to a friend!—

"You ask what my silence means? it means measurement of speaking, and not speaking. For he who can do it in whole, will more easily do it in part. Besides, it allays anger, when it is not brought out into words, but is extinguished in itself."—*Ep.* 96. Again: "I do not forbid your coming to me; though my tongue be still, my ears shall be gladly open to your conversation; since to hear what is fitting is not less precious than to speak it."—97. And again: "I am silent in conversation, as learning to speak what I ought to speak; moreover, I am exercising myself in mastery of the passions. If this satisfies the inquirer, it is well; if not, at least silence brings this gain, that I have not to enter into explanations."—98.

Gregory was now fifty-two or three; there is something very remarkable in a man so advanced in life taking such vigorous measures to overcome himself.

The following passages from his poems allude to the same, or similar infirmities:—

I lost, O Lord, the use of yesterday ;
Anger came on, and stole my heart away.
O may I find this morn some inward-piercing ray !

Again,

The serpent comes anew ! I hold thy feet,
O David ! list, and strike thy harp-strings sweet !
Hence ! choking spirit, hence ! for saintly minds unmeet.

Some temptation or other is alluded to in the following poems ; though perhaps it is not fair to make a poet responsible, in his own person, for all he speaks as if from himself.

MORNING.

I rise, and yield my clasped hands to thee !
Henceforth no deed of dark shall trouble me,
Thy sacrifice this day ;
Calm, stationed at my post, and with free soul
Stemming the waves of passion as they roll.
Ah ! should I from Thee stray,
My hoary head, Thy table where I bow,
Will be my shame, which are mine honour now.
Thus I set out ;—Lord ! lead me on my way !

EVENING.

O Holiest Truth ! how have I lied to Thee !
This day I vowed Thy festival should be ;
Yet I am dim ere night.
Surely I made my prayer, and I did deem
That I could keep in me Thy morning beam,
Immaculate and bright.
But my foot slipped, and, as I lay, he came,
My gloomy foe, and robbed me of heaven's flame.
Help Thou my darkness, Lord ! till I am light.

In the verses on Morning, an allusion may be observed to his priesthood. The following lines bear a more express reference :—

In service o'er the mystic feast I stand,
I cleanse Thy victim-flock, and bring them near
In holiest wise, and by a bloodless rite.
O bounteous blaze ! O gushing Fount of Light !
(As best I know, who need Thy cleansing hand,)
Dread office this, bemired souls to clear
Of their defilement, and again make bright.

These lines may have an allusion which introduces us to the following, which are on a subject to which I have already invited the reader's attention, and shall again.

As viewing sin, e'en in its faintest trace [1],
Murder in wrath, and in the wanton oath
The perjured tongue, and therefore shunning them,
So deem'd I safe a strict virginity.
And hence our ample choir of holiest souls
Are followers of the unfleshly seraphim,
And Him who 'mid them reigns in lonely light.
These, one and all, rush towards the thought of death,
And hope of second life, with single heart,
Loosed from the law and chain of marriage vow.
For I was but a captive at my birth,
Sin my first being, till its base discipline
Revolted me towards a nobler path.
Then Christ drew near me, and the Virgin-born
Spoke the new call to join His virgin-train.
So now towards highest heaven my innocent brow
I raise exultingly, sans let or bond,
Leaving no heir of this poor tabernacle
To ape me when my proper frame is broke ;
But solitary with my only God,
And truest souls to bear me company.

It so happens that we have a vast deal of Gregory's

[1] Fertur S. Basilii districta sententia. Et mulierem, inquit, ignoro, et virgo non sum. In tantum intellexit incorruptionem carnis non tam in mulieris esse abstinentiâ, quàm in integritate cordis.—*Cassian. Instit.* vi. 19.

poetry, which he doubtless never intended for publication, but which formed the recreation of his retirement. From one of these compositions, the following playful extract, on the same subject, is selected :—

As when the hand some mimic form would paint,
It marks its purpose first in shadows faint,
And next its store of varied hues applies,
Till outlines fade, and the full limbs arise ;
So the Lord's holy choice, the virgin heart,
Once held in duty but a lesser part,
When the Law swayed us in Religion's youth,
Tracing, with lustre pale, the angelic truth.
But, when the Christ came by a virgin-birth,—
His radiant chariot-course from heaven to earth,—
And, spurning father for His mortal state,
Did Eve and all her daughters consecrate ;
Solved fleshly laws, and in the letter's place
Gave us the spirit and the word of grace ;—
Then shone the glorious Celibate at length,
Robed in the dazzling lightnings of its strength,
Surpassing spells of earth and marriage-vow,
As soul the body,—heaven this world below,
The eternal peace of saints life's troubled span,
And the high throne of God the haunts of man.
So now there circles round the King of Light,
A heaven on earth, a blameless court and bright,
Aiming as emblems of their God to shine,
Christ in their heart, and on their brow His sign,
Soft funeral lights in the world's twilight dim,
Seeing their God, and ever one with Him.

Ye countless brethren of the marriage-band,
Slaves of the enfeebled heart and plighted hand !
I see you bear aloft your haughty gaze,
Gems deck your hair, and silk your limbs arrays ;
Come, tell the gain which wedlock has conferred
On man ; and then the single shall be heard.

The married many thus might plead, I ween ;
Full glib their tongue, full confident their mien :—
" Hear, all who live ! to whom the nuptial rite
Has brought the privilege of life and light,
We, who are wedded, but the law obey,
Stamped at creation on our blood and clay,
What time the Demiurge our line began,
Oped Adam's side, and out of man drew man.
Thenceforth let children of a mortal sod
Honour the law of earth, the primal law of God.

" List, you shall hear the gifts of price that lie
Gathered and bound within the marriage-tie.
Who taught the arts of life, the truths that sleep
In earth, or highest heaven, or vasty deep ?
Who raised the town ?—who gave the type and germ
Of social union, and of sceptre firm ?
Who filled the mart, and urged the vessel brave
To link in one far countries o'er the wave ?
Who the first husbandman, the glebe to plough,
And rear the garden, but the marriage-vow ?

" Nay, list again ! who seek its kindly chain,
A second self, a double presence gain ;
Hands, eyes, and ears, to act or suffer here,
Till e'en the weak inspire both love and fear—
A comrade's sigh, to soothe when cares annoy—
A comrade's smile, to elevate his joy.

" Nor say it binds to an ungodly life ;
When want is urgent, prayers and vows are rife.
Light heart he bears, who has no yoke at home,
Scant need of blessings as the seasons come.
But wife, and offspring, and the treasured hoard,
Raise us in dread and faith towards the Lord.
Take love away, and life would be defaced,
A ghastly vision on the mountain-waste,
Heartless, and stern, bereft of the soft charm
Which steals from age its woes, from passion's sting its harm.

No child's sweet pranks once more to make us young ;
No ties of place about our heart-strings flung
No public haunts to cheer ; no festive tide,
Where harmless mirth and smiling wit preside ;
A life, which scorns the gifts which Heaven assign'd,
Nor knows the sympathy of human kind.

" Prophets and teachers, priests and victor kings,
Decked with each grace, which heaven-taught nature brings,
These were no giant offspring of the earth,
But to the marriage-promise owe their birth :—
Moses and Samuel, David, David's son,
The blessed Tishbite, and more blessed John,
The sacred twelve in apostolic choir,
Strong-hearted Paul, instinct with seraph-fire,
And others, now or erst, who to high heaven aspire.
Bethink ye ; should the single state be best,
Yet who the single, but my offspring blest ?
My sons, be still, nor with your parents strive,
They coupled in their day, and so ye live."

Thus marriage pleads. Now let her rival speak ;
Dim is her downcast eye, and pale her cheek ;
Untrimmed her gear ; no sandals on her feet ;
A sparest form for austere tenant meet.
She drops her veil her modest face around,
And her lips open, but we hear no sound.
I will address her :—" Hail ! O child of heaven,
Glorious within ! to whom a post is given
Hard by the throne, where Angels bow and fear,
E'en while thou hast a name and mission here,
O deign thy voice, unveil thy brow, and see
Thy ready guard and minister in me.
Oft hast thou come heaven-wafted to my breast,
Bright Spirit ! so come again, and give me rest !"

. . . " Ah ! who has hither drawn my backward feet,
Changing for worldly strife my lone retreat ?
Where, in the silent chant of holy deeds,
I praise my God, and tend the sick soul's needs ;

By toils of day, and vigils of the night,
By gushing tears, and blessed lustral rite.
I have no sway amid the crowd, no art
In speech, no place in council or in mart ;
Nor human law, nor judges throned on high,
Smile on my face, and grant my words reply.
Let others seek earth's honours ; be it mine
One law to cherish, and to track one line ;
Straight on towards heaven to press with single bent,
To know and love my God, and then to die content."
&c. &c.

It would take up too much time to continue the poem, of which I have attempted the above rude and very free translation, as indeed are all the foregoing ; nor is it to the purpose to set forth at length before the reader of the present day a formal defence and recommendation of celibacy, though there is no reason why Gregory should not have his own opinion about it as well as another.

I end with one or two stanzas, which give an account of the place and circumstances of his retirement. I am obliged again to warn the reader, that he must not fancy he has gained an idea of Gregory's poetry from my attempts at translation ; and should it be objected that this is not treating Gregory well, I answer, that at least I am as true to the original as if I exhibited it in plain prose.

Some one whispered yesterday
Of the rich and fashionable,
" Gregory, in his own small way,
Easy was, and comfortable.

" Had he not of wealth his fill,
Whom a garden gay did bless,
And a gently trickling rill,
And the sweets of idleness ?"

I made answer, "Is it ease,
Fasts to keep, and tears to shed?
Vigil hours and wounded knees,
Call you such a pleasant bed?

"Thus a veritable monk
Does to death his fleshly frame;
Be there who in sloth are sunk,
They have forfeited the name."

CHAPTER X.

VINCENTIUS OF LERINS.

"Though the Lord give you the bread of adversity and the water of affliction, yet shall not thy Teachers be removed into a corner any more, but thine eyes shall see thy Teachers; and thine ears shall hear a Word behind thee, saying, This is the way, walk ye in it, when ye turn to the right hand and when ye turn to the left."

It is pretty clear that most persons of this day will be disposed to wonder at the earnestness shown by those ancient bishops who have formed the subject of the foregoing pages, Ambrose, Basil, and Gregory, in defence of the Catholic faith. Ambrose would not give up a Church to the Arians, because their creed was unsound. Basil incessantly importuned the West to interfere in the concerns of the East, for the overthrow of these selfsame Arians. Gregory thought he had acquitted himself well, when he consented to be pelted with stones for preaching against these Arians in Constantinople. Yet these repeated protests and efforts were all about what? The man of the world will answer, "strifes of words, perverse disputings, curious questions, which do not tend to

advance what ought to be the one end of all religion, peace and love. This is what comes of insisting on orthodoxy; putting the whole world into a fever!" Tantum religio potuit, &c., as the Epicurean poet says.

Such certainly is the phenomena which we have to contemplate: theirs was a state of mind seldom experienced, and little understood, in this day; however, for that reason, it is at least interesting to the antiquary, even were it not a sound and Christian state also. The highest end of Church union, to which the mass of educated men now look, is quiet and unanimity; as if the Church were not rather built upon faith, and truth really the first object of the Christian's efforts,—peace but the second. The one idea which statesmen, and lawyers, and journalists, and men of letters have of a clergyman, is that he is by profession "a man of peace:" and if he has occasion to denounce, or to resist, or to protest, a cry is raised, "O how disgraceful in a minister of peace!" The Church is thought invaluable as a promoter of good order and sobriety; but is regarded as nothing more. Far be it from me to seem to disparage what is really one of her high functions; but still a part of her duty will never be tantamount to the whole of it. At present the *beau idéal* of a clergyman in the eyes of many is a "reverend gentleman," who has a large family, and "administers spiritual consolation." Now I make bold to say, that confessorship for the Catholic faith is one part of the duty of Christian ministers, nay, and Christian laymen too. Yet in this day, if at any time there is any difference

in matters of doctrine between Christians, the first and last wish—the one sovereign object—of so-called judicious men, is to hush it up. No matter what the difference is about; *that* is thought so little to the purpose, that your well-judging men will not even take the trouble to inquire what it is. It may be, for what they know, a question of theism or atheism; but they will not admit, whatever it is, that it can be more than secondary to the preservation of a good understanding between Christians. They think, whatever it is, it may safely be postponed for future consideration — that things will right themselves—the one pressing object being to present a bold and extended front to our external enemies, to prevent the outward fabric of the Church from being weakened by dissensions, and insulted by those who witness them. The Church exists, in an especial way, for the sake of the Faith committed to her keeping. But our practical men forget there may be remedies worse than the disease; that latent heresy may be worse than a contest of "party;" and, in their treatment of the Church, they fulfil the satirist's well-known line:—

"Propter vitam vivendi perdere causas."

No wonder they do so, when they have been so long accustomed to merge the Church in the nations, and to talk of "protestantism" in the abstract as synonymous with true religion; to consider that the characteristic merit of our Church is its *tolerance*, as they call it, and that its greatest misfortune is the exposure to the world of those opposite principles and

views which are really at work within it. But talking of exposure, what a scandal it was in St. Peter to exert his apostolical powers on Ananias; and in St. John, to threaten Diotrephes? What an exposure in St. Paul, to tell the Corinthians he had "a rod" for them, were they disobedient! One should have thought, indeed, that weapons were committed to the Church for use as well as for show; but the present age apparently holds otherwise, considering that the Church is then most primitive, when it neither cares for the faith itself, nor uses the divinely ordained means by which it is to be guarded. Now, to people who acquiesce in this view, I know well that Basil and Gregory have not more of authority than an English non-juror; still, to those who do not acquiesce in it, it may be some little comfort, some encouragement, some satisfaction, to see that they are not the first persons in the world who have felt and judged of religion in that particular way now in disrepute.

However, some persons will allow, perhaps, that doctrinal truth ought to be maintained, and that the clergy ought to maintain it: but then they will urge that we should not make the path of truth too narrow; that it is a royal and a broad highway by which we travel heavenward, whereas it has been the one object of theologians, in every age, to encroach upon it, till at length it has become scarcely broad enough for two to walk abreast in. And moreover, it will be objected, that over-exactness was the very fault of the fourth and fifth centuries in particular, which refined upon the doctrines of the

Holy Trinity and our Lord's Incarnation, till the way of life became like the razor's edge, which is said in the Koran to be drawn over the place of punishment, and must be traversed by every one at the end of the world.

Now I cannot possibly deny, however disadvantageous it may be to their reputation, that the Fathers do represent the way of faith as narrow, nay, and even as being the more divine and the more royal for that very narrowness. Such orthodoxy certainly is; but here it is obvious to ask whether this very characteristic of it may not possibly be rather an argument for than against its divine origin. Certain it is, that such nicety, as it is called, is not unknown to other religious dispensations, creeds, and covenants, besides that which the primitive Church identified with Christianity. Nor is it a paradox to maintain that the whole system of religion, natural as well as revealed, is full of similar appointments. As to the subject of ethics, even a heathen philosopher tells us, that virtue consists in a mean,—that is, in a point between indefinitely-extending extremes; "men being in one way good, and many ways bad." The same principle, again, is seen in the revealed system of spiritual communications; the grant of grace and privilege depending on positive ordinances, simple and definite,—on the use of a little water, the utterance of a few words, the imposition of hands, and the like; which, it will perhaps be granted, are really essential to the conveyance of spiritual blessings, yet are confessedly as formal and technical as any creed can be

represented to be. In a word, such technicality is involved in the very idea of a *means*, which may even be defined to be a something appointed at God's inscrutable pleasure, as the necessary condition of something else; and the simple question before us is, merely *the matter of fact*, viz. whether any doctrine *is* set forth by revelation as necessary to be believed *in order* to salvation? Antecedent difficulty in the question there is none; or rather, the probability is in favour of there being some necessary doctrine, from the analogy of the other parts of religion. The question is simply about the matter of fact. This analogy is perspicuously expressed in one of the sermons of St. Leo:—"Not only," he says, "in the exercise of virtue and the observance of the commandments, but also in the path of faith, strait and difficult is the way which leads to life; and it requires great pains, and involves great risks, to walk without stumbling along the one footway of sound doctrine, amid the uncertain opinions and the plausible untruths of the unskilful, and to escape all peril of mistake when the toils of error are on every side."—*Serm.* 25.

St. Gregory says the same thing:—"We have bid farewell to contentious deviations of doctrine, and compensations on either side, neither Sabellianizing nor Arianizing. These are the sports of the evil one, who is a bad arbiter of our matters. But we, pacing along the middle and royal way, *in which also the essence of the virtues lies*, in the judgment of the learned, believe in Father, Son, and Holy Ghost."—*Orat.* 32.

On the whole, then, I see nothing very strange

either in orthodoxy lying in what at first sight appears like subtle and minute exactness of doctrine, or in its being our duty to contend even to confessorship for such exactness. Whether it be thus exact, and whether the exactness of Ambrose or Gregory be the true and revealed exactness, is quite another question: all I say is, that it is no great difficulty to believe that it may be what they say it is, both as to its truth and its importance.

But now supposing the question is asked, *is* Ambrose or Gregory right? and is our Church right in maintaining with them the Athanasian doctrine on those sacred points to which it relates, and condemning those who hold otherwise? what answer is to be given? I answer by asking, if any one inquired how we know that Gregory or Ambrose was right, and our Church right, in receiving St. Paul's Epistles, what answer we should make? The answer would be, that it is a matter of history that the Apostle wrote those which are ascribed to him. And what is meant by its being a matter of history? why, that it has ever been so believed, so declared, so recorded, so acted on, from the first down to this day; that there is no assignable point of time when it was not believed, no assignable point at which the belief was introduced; that the records of past ages fade away and vanish *in* the belief; that in proportion as past ages speak at all, they speak in one way, and only fail to bear a witness when they fail to have a voice. What stronger testimony can we have of a past fact?

Now the same evidence have we for the Catholic doctrines which Ambrose or Gregory maintained;

they have never and no where, *not* been maintained; or in other words, wherever we know any thing positive of ancient times and places, there we are told of these doctrines also. As far as the records of history extend, they include these doctrines, as avowed always, every where, and by all. This is the great canon of the *Quod semper, quod ubique, quod ab omnibus*, which saves us from the misery of having to find out the truth for ourselves from Scripture on our independent and private judgment. He who gave Scripture, also gave us the interpretation of Scripture; and He gave the one and the other gift in the same way, by the testimony of past ages, as matter of historical knowledge, or what is sometimes called, by tradition. We receive the Catholic doctrines as we receive the canon of Scripture, because, as our Article expresses it, "*of their authority*" *there* "*was never any doubt in the Church.*"

We receive them on Catholic tradition, and therefore they are called Catholic doctrines. And that they are Catholic, is a proof that they are Apostolic; they never could have been universally received in the Church, unless they had had their origin in the origin of the Church, unless they had been made the foundation of the Church by its founders. As the separate successions of bishops in various countries have but one common origin, the Apostles, so what has been handed down through these separate successions comes from that one origin. The Apostolic College is the only point in which all the lines converge, and from which they spring. Private traditions, wandering unconnected traditions, are of no authority; but

permanent, recognised, public, definite, intelligible, multiplied, concordant testimonies to one and the same doctrine, bring with them an overwhelming evidence of apostolical origin. We ground the claims of orthodoxy on no powers of reasoning, however great, on the credit of no names, however imposing, but on an external fact, on an argument the same as that by which we prove the genuineness and authority of the four gospels. The unanimous tradition of all the churches to certain articles of faith is surely an irresistible evidence, more trustworthy far than that of witnesses to certain facts in a court of law, by how much the testimony of a number is more cogent than the testimony of two or three. That this really is the ground on which the narrow line of orthodoxy was maintained in ancient times, is plain from an inspection of the writings of the very men who maintained it, Ambrose and Gregory, or Athanasius and Hilary, and the rest, who set forth its Catholic character in more ways than it is possible here to instance or even explain. However, in order to give the general reader some idea of the state of the case, I will make some copious extracts from the famous tract of Vincent of Lerins on Heresy. He wrote in the early part of the fifth century, was originally a layman, and by profession a soldier. In after life he became a monk and took orders. Lerins, the site of his monastery, is one of the small islands off the south coast of France. He first states what the principle is he would maintain, and the circumstances under which he maintains it; and if his principle is reasonable and valuable in itself, so does it come to us with great weight under the

circumstances which led him to his exposition of it[1].

"Inquiring often," he says, "with great desire, and attention, of very many excellent, holy, and learned men, how and by what means I might assuredly, and as it were by some general and ordinary way, discern the true Catholic faith from false and wicked heresy; to this question I had usually this answer from them all, that whether I or any other desired to find out the fraud of heretics, daily springing up, and to escape their snares, and willingly would continue in a sound faith, himself safe and sound, that he ought two manner of ways by God's assistance to defend and preserve his faith; that is, *first, by the authority of the law of God; secondly, by the tradition of the Catholic Church.*"—Ch. 2.

It will be observed, he is speaking of the *mode* in which an *individual* is to seek and attain the truth; and it will be observed also, as the revered bishop Jebb has pointed out, that he is suffering and sanctioning the use of personal inquiry. He proceeds:—

"Here some man, perhaps, may ask, seeing the canon of the Scripture is perfect, and most abundantly of itself sufficient for all things, what need we join unto it the authority of the Church's understanding and interpretation? The reason is this, because the Scripture being of itself so deep and profound, all men do not understand it in one and the same sense, but divers men diversely, this man and that man, this

[1] The Oxford translation of 1837 is used in the following extracts. The whole volume, with appendix, &c., consists of no more than 137 duodecimo pages.

way and that way, expound and interpret the sayings thereof, so that to one's thinking, so many men, so many opinions almost may be gathered out of them: for Novatian expoundeth it one way, Photinus another, Sabellius after this sort, Donatus after that; Arius, Eunomius, Macedonius will have this exposition; Apollinaris and Priscilian will have that; Jovinian, Pelagius, Celestius, gather this sense; and, to conclude, Nestorius findeth out that; and therefore very necessary it is for the avoiding of so great windings and turnings of errors so various, that the line of expounding the Prophets and Apostles be directed and drawn, according to the rule of the Ecclesiastical and Catholic sense.

"Again, within the Catholic Church itself we are greatly to consider, that we hold that, which hath been believed *every where*, *always*, and *of all men*: for that is truly and properly *Catholic* (as the very force and nature of the word doth declare) which comprehendeth all things in general after an universal manner, and that shall we do if we follow *universality*, *antiquity*, *consent*. Universality shall we follow thus, if we profess that one faith to be true which the whole Church throughout the world acknowledgeth and confesseth. Antiquity shall we follow, if we depart not any whit from those senses which it is plain that our holy elders and fathers generally held. Consent shall we likewise follow, if in this very antiquity itself we hold the definitions and opinions of all, or at any rate almost all, the priests and doctors together."—Ch. 2, 3.

It is sometimes said, that what is called orthodoxy or Catholicism is only the opinion of one or two

Fathers,—fallible men, however able they might be or persuasive,—who created a theology, and imposed it on their generation, and thereby superseded Scriptural truth and the real gospel. Let us see how Vincent treats such individual teachers, however highly gifted. He is speaking of the Judaizers of the Apostles' time in the opening sentence:—

"When, therefore, such kind of men, wandering up and down through provinces and cities to set their errors to sale, came also unto the Galatians, and these after they had heard them were delighted with the filthy drugs of heretical novelty, loathing the truth, and casting up again the heavenly manna of the Apostolic and Catholic doctrine: the authority of his Apostolic office so puts itself forth as to decree very severely in this sort. 'But although (quoth he) we or an Angel from heaven evangelize unto you beside that which we have evangelized, be he Anathema[1].' What meaneth this that he saith, 'But although we?' why did he not rather say, 'But although I?' that is to say, Although Peter, although Andrew, although John, yea, finally, although the whole company of the Apostles, evangelize unto you otherwise than we have evangelized, be he accursed. A terrible censure, in that for maintaining the possession of the first faith he spared not himself, nor any other of the Apostles! But this is a small matter: 'Although an Angel from heaven (quoth he) evangelize unto you, beside that which I have evangelized, be he Anathema,' he was not contented for keeping the faith once delivered to make mention

[1] Gal. i. 8.

of man's weak nature, unless also he included those excellent creatures the Angels. 'Although we (quoth he) or an Angel from heaven,' not that the holy Angels of heaven can now sin, but this is the meaning of that he saith: Although (quoth he) that might be which cannot be, whosoever he be that goeth about to change the faith which was once delivered, be he accursed. But peradventure he uttered those words slightly, and cast them forth rather of human affection than decreed them by divine direction. God forbid: for it followeth, and that urged with great earnestness of repeated inculcation, 'As I have foretold you (quoth he), and now again I tell you, If any body evangelize unto you beside that which you have received, be he Anathema.' He said not, If any man preach unto you beside that which you have received, let him be blessed, let him be commended, let him be received, but let him be *Anathema*, that is, separated, thrust out, excluded, lest the cruel infection of one sheep with his poisoned company corrupt the sound flock of Christ."—Ch. 12 and 13.

Here, then, is a point of doctrine which must be carefully insisted on. The Fathers are principally to be considered as *witnesses*, not as *authorities*. They are witnesses of an existing state of things, and their treatises are, as it were, *histories*,—teaching us, in the first instance, matters of fact, not of opinion. Whatever they themselves might be, whether deeply or poorly taught in Christian faith and love, they speak, not their own thoughts, but the received views of their respective ages. The especial value of their works lies in their opening upon us a state of the Church which else we should have no

notion of. We read in their writings a great number of high and glorious doings and customs; and we say, "All this must have had an existence somewhere or other in those times. These very men, indeed, may be merely speaking by rote, and not understand what they say; but it matters not to the profit of their writings what they were themselves." It matters not to the profit of their writings, nor again to the authority resulting from them; for the *times* in which they wrote of course *are* of authority, though the Fathers themselves have none. *They* may be nothing more than bare witnesses; yet so much as this they have a claim to be considered.

This is even the strict Protestant view. We are not obliged to take the Fathers as *authorities*, only as *witnesses*. Charity, indeed, and piety will prompt the Christian student to go further, and to believe that men who laboured so unremittingly, and suffered so severely in the cause of the Gospel, really did possess somewhat of that earnest love of the truth which they professed, and were enlightened by that influence for which they prayed; but I am stating the strict Protestant doctrine, the great polemical principle ever to be borne in mind, that the Fathers are to be adduced in controversy merely as testimonies to an existing state of things, not as authorities. At the same time, no candid Protestant will be loath to admit, that the state of things to which they bear witness, *is*, as I have already said, a most grave and conclusive authority in guiding us in those particulars of our duty about which Scripture is silent; succeeding, as it does, so very close upon the age of the Apostles.

Thus much I claim of consistent Protestants, and thus much I grant to them. Gregory and the rest may have been but nominal Christians. Athanasius himself may have been very dark in all points of doctrine, in spite of his twenty years' exile and his innumerable perils by sea and land; the noble Ambrose, a mere high churchman; and Basil, a mere monk. I do not dispute these points; though I claim "the right of private judgment," so far as to have my own very definite opinion in the matter, which I keep to myself.

However, Vincent does not scruple to treat as severely as a Protestant could desire, some at least of those who commonly are included under the name of Fathers. Let us hear what he says of Origen and Tertullian.

"I suppose that, although I could bring forth many to show this kind of temptation, yet there is almost none which can be compared to the temptation of Origen, in whom were very many gifts, so rare, so singular, so strange, that in the beginning any would have thought that his opinions might have been believed of all men. For if life procureth authority, he was a man of great industry, of great chastity, patience, and labour: if family or learning, who more noble? being in the first place of that house which was honourable for martyrdom, himself afterward for Christ deprived not of his father only, but also spoiled of all his patrimony; and so much he profited in the straits of holy poverty, that, as it is reported, for the confession of Christ's name he often endured affliction. Neither had he only these gifts, all which afterward served for temptation, but

also a force of wit, so profound, so quick, so elegant, that he far excelled almost all other whatsoever. A man of such learning and universal erudition, that there were few things in divinity, in human philosophy perhaps almost none, which he had not perfectly attained; who having gotten the Greek tongue, laboured also with success about the Hebrew. And for his eloquence, why should I speak of it? whose language was so pleasant, so soft, so sweet, that in my opinion not words but honey flowed from his mouth. What things were so hard to believe, which with force of argument he made not plain? what so difficult to bring to pass, which he made not to seem easy? But perchance he maintained his assertions by arguments only. Nay, without question there was never any doctor which used more examples of holy Scripture. But yet haply he wrote not much. No man living more; yea so much, that all his works seem to me not only more than can be read, but even more than can be found; who, not to lack any furtherance to learning, lived also until he was passing old. But yet perchance unfortunate in his scholars. What man ever more happy? for of his nursing grew up doctors and priests without number, yea, confessors and martyrs. Further, who is able to prosecute in words in what admiration he was with all men? in what glory? in what favour? Who that was more zealous of religion, repaired not to him from the furthest parts of the world? What Christian did not venerate him almost as a prophet? What philosopher did not honour him as a master? And how greatly he was reverenced not only of private men, but also of the empire itself, histories do

speak, which report that he was sent for of Alexander the emperor's mother, to wit, for the merit of his heavenly wisdom, with the grace whereof he was full, as was she of love to the same. His epistles also testify the same thing, which with the authority of a Christian master he wrote unto Philip the emperor, the first Christian amongst all the Roman princes. And if any man upon our report admitteth not the testimony of a Christian touching his wonderful knowledge, at least let him receive an heathen confession in the testimony of philosophers. For that impious Porphyry saith, that himself, being but yet, as it were, a boy, moved with his fame, travelled unto Alexandria, where he did see him, being then old, but yet such an one and so learned, as that he had builded him a fortress of universal knowledge. Time would sooner fail me, than I could touch, though briefly, upon those notable gifts which were in that man, all which notwithstanding pertained not only to the glory of religion, but also to the greatness of the temptation. For among how many is there one that would willingly have forsaken a man of such wit, of so deep learning, of so rare grace, and would not sooner have used that saying, that he had rather err with Origen, than believe aright with others? And why should I say more? the matter came to that issue, that, as the end showed, not an usual and common, but a passing dangerous temptation of so great a man, so great a doctor, so great a prophet, carried away very many from soundness of faith: wherefore this Origen, so rare and singular a man, too presumptuously abusing the grace of God, indulging too much his own wit, trusting himself as

sufficient, little esteeming the old simplicity of the Christian religion, presuming to be wiser than all other, contemning the traditions of the Church, and the old Fathers' teaching, expounding certain chapters of the Scriptures after a new fashion, deserved that the Church of God should also say of him, 'If there arise up in the midst of thee a prophet;' and a little after, 'Thou shalt not hear (quoth he) the words of that prophet;' and again, 'Because (quoth he) your Lord God doth tempt you, whether you love him or no.' And surely it is not only a temptation, but also a great temptation, when a man seduceth secretly and by little and little the Church depending upon him, (admiring his wit, knowledge, eloquence, conversation, and grace, nothing suspecting him, nothing fearing him,) suddenly from the old religion to new profaneness. But some will say that Origen's books be corrupted: I will not gainsay it, but rather wish it were so: for that hath been both said and written by some, not only catholics, but also heretics. But this is now the point we are to consider, that although not he, yet the books passing abroad under his name, are a great temptation, which, full of many hurtful blasphemies, are read and loved, not as the books of others, but as his; so that although Origen gave no cause of originating erroneous doctrine, yet his authority hath been the occasion why the error hath been received[1].

[1] The tenets imputed to the Origenists in Vincent's age were these: 1. That the Son of God could not see the Father, nor the Holy Spirit the Son. 2. That the soul had sinned in a pre-existent state, and the body was its prison. 3. That the devil and the fallen spirits would one time repent. 4. That

"The case also of Tertullian is the very same with the former: for as Origen is to be thought the best among the Greek doctors, so Tertullian among the Latins without controversy is the chief of all our writers. For who was more learned than he? Who in divinity or humanity more practised? for by a certain wonderful capacity of mind, he attained to, and understood, all philosophy, all the sects of philosophers, all their founders and supporters, all their systems, all sorts of histories and studies. And for his wit, was he not so excellent, so grave, so forcible, that he almost undertook the overthrow of nothing, which either by quickness of wit or weight of reason he crushed not? Further, who is able to express the praises which his style of speech deserves, which is fraught (I know not how) with that force of reason, that such as it cannot persuade, it compels to assent: whose so many words almost are so many sentences; whose so many senses, so many victories. This know Marcion and Apelles, Praxeas and Hermogenes, Jews, Gentiles, Gnostics, and divers others: whose blasphemous opinions he hath overthrown with his many and great volumes, as it had been with thunderbolts. And yet this man after all this, this Tertullian, I say, not holding the Catholic doctrine, that is, the universal and old

Adam and Eve had no bodies before the fall. 5. That the flesh would not rise again. 6. That the terrestrial paradise was spoken of allegorically. 7. That "the waters above the heavens" were angels, and those above and under the earth, evil spirits. 8. That man by sinning effaced the image of God.—Vide Huet. Origen. ii. 4. § 1. n. 12. Giesler, Eccles. Hist. vol. i. § 83.

faith, being far more eloquent than faithful, changing afterwards his mind, at last did that which the blessed confessor Hilary in a certain place writeth of him; 'He discredited (quoth he) with his latter error his worthy writings:' and he also was a great temptation in the Church. But hereof I would not say more; only this I will add, that by his defending, against the precept of Moses, for true prophecies the new madness of Montanus springing up in the Church, and those mad dreams about new doctrine of frantic women, he deserved that we should also say of him and his writings, 'If a prophet shall rise up in the midst of thee,' and straight after, 'thou shalt not hear the words of that prophet.' Why so? 'Because (quoth he) your Lord God doth tempt you, whether you love him or no.'

"We ought, therefore, evidently to note by these, so many, so great, and divers other such weighty examples in the Church, and according to the laws of Deuteronomy most clearly to understand, that if at any time any ecclesiastical teacher strayeth from the faith, that God's providence doth suffer that for our trial, whether we love Him or no in our whole heart, and in our whole soul."—Ch. 23, 24.

Vincentius proceeds to speak of the misery of doubting:—

"Which being so, he is a true and genuine Catholic that loveth the truth of God, the Church, the body of Christ; that preferreth nothing before the religion of God; nothing before the Catholic faith; not any man's authority, not love, not wit, not eloquence, not philosophy; but contemning all these things, and in faith abiding fixed and stable,

whatsoever he knoweth the Catholic Church universally in old times to have holden, that only he purposeth with himself to hold and believe; but whatsoever doctrine, new and not before heard of, such an one shall perceive to be afterwards brought in of some one man, beside all or contrary to all the saints, let him know that doctrine doth not pertain to religion, but rather to temptation, especially being instructed with the sayings of the blessed Apostle St. Paul. For this is that which he writeth in his first Epistle to the Corinthians; 'There must (quoth he) be heresies also, that they which are approved may be made manifest among you.' As though he should say; This is the cause why the authors of heresies are not straight rooted out by God, that the approved may be made manifest, that is, that every one may appear how stedfastly, faithfully, and constantly, he loveth the Catholic faith. And certain it is, that upon the springing up of any novelty, straightway is discerned both the weight of the corn and the lightness of the chaff; then is that easily blown out of the floor which before lightly remained in the floor; for some by and by fly away, others only shaken, are both afraid to perish, and ashamed to return, remaining wounded, half dead, half alive, like unto those which have drunk so much poison, as neither killeth, nor well digesteth, neither bringeth death, nor yet permitteth to live. O the miserable state of such persons! with what seas of cares, with what storms, are they tossed! for now at one time, as the wind driveth them, they are carried away headlong in error; at another time, coming again to themselves, they are beaten back like contrary waves;

sometime with rash presumption they allow such things as seem uncertain, at another time of pusillanimity they are in fear even about those things which are certain; doubtful which way to take, which way to return, what to desire, what to avoid, what to hold, what to let go; which misery and affliction of a wavering and unsettled heart, were they wise, is as a medicine of God's mercy towards them. For this is the reason why (being out of the safe port of the Catholic faith) they are shaken, tossed, and almost killed with storms and troubles, that they should take down the sails of their proud mind, which they vainly hoisted up to the winds of novelties, and so retire and keep themselves within the most sure port of their calm and good mother, and first cast up those bitter and turbulent waters of errors, that afterwards they may drink of the flowing rivers of lively and pure water. Let them learn well to forget that, which well they never learned; and those articles which the Church teacheth, and by reason are to be attained to, let them endeavour to understand; and those which surpass reason, let them believe.

"Which being so, oftentimes calling to mind and remembering the selfsame thing, I cannot sufficiently marvel at the great madness of some men, at so great impiety, of their blinded hearts, lastly, at so great a licentious desire of error, that they be not content with the rule of faith once delivered us, and received from our ancestors, but do every day search and seek for new doctrine, ever desirous to add to, to change, and to take away something from, religion; as though that were not the doctrine of God,

which it is enough to have once revealed, but rather man's institution, which cannot but by continual amendment (or rather correction) be perfected.

"Whereas the Divine Scriptures cry out, 'Do not transfer the bounds which thy fathers have set down;' and 'Do not judge over thy judge;' and, 'The serpent will bite him that cutteth the hedge;' and that saying of the Apostle, by which all wicked novelties of all heretics have often been cut in pieces, as it were by a spiritual sword, and always hereafter shall be[1]. 'O Timothy, keep the *depositum*, avoiding the profane novelties of voices, and oppositions of falsely-called knowledge, which certain promising have erred about the faith.'"—Ch. 25, 26.

If the general reader has but the twentieth part of the pleasure in perusing, perhaps for the first time, which I have in quoting for the twentieth, he will let me continue a little longer:—

"'O Timothy, (quoth he,) keep the *depositum*, avoiding profane novelties of voices.' This exclamation O, both showeth foresight, and also argueth charity: for he foresaw certain errors, which beforehand he was sorry for. Who at this day is Timothy, but either generally the whole Church, or especially the whole body of prelates, who ought either themselves to have a sound knowledge of divine religion, or who ought to infuse it into others? What is meant by *keep the depositum?* Keep it (quoth he) for fear of thieves, for danger of enemies, lest when men be asleep, they oversow cockle among that good seed of wheat, which the Son of man hath sowed in

[1] 1 Tim. vi. 20.

His field. 'Keep (quoth he) the *depositum*.' What is meant by this *depositum?* that is, that which is committed to thee, not that which is invented of thee: that which thou hast received, not that which thou hast devised; a thing not of wit, but of learning; not of private assumption, but of public tradition; a thing brought to thee, not brought forth of thee; wherein thou must not be an author, but a keeper; not a beginner, but a follower; not a leader, but an observer. Keep the *depositum*. Preserve the talent of the Catholic faith safe and undiminished; that which is committed to thee, let that remain with thee, and that deliver. Thou hast received gold, render then gold; I will not have one thing for another; do not for gold render either impudently lead, or craftily brass; I will not the show, but the very nature of gold itself. O Timothy, O priest, O teacher, O doctor, if God's gift hath made thee meet and sufficient for thy wit, exercise, and learning, be the Beseleel of the spiritual tabernacle, engrave the precious stones of God's doctrine, faithfully set them, wisely adorn them, give them brightness, give them grace, give them beauty. That which men before believed obscurely, let them by thy exposition understand more clearly. Let posterity rejoice for coming to the understanding of that by thy means, which antiquity without that understanding had in veneration. Yet for all this, in such sort deliver the same things which thou hast learned, that albeit thou teachest after a new manner yet thou never teach new things.

"'O Timothy, (quoth he,) keep the *depositum*, avoid profane novelties of voices.' Avoid (quoth he)

as a viper, as a scorpion, as a basilisk, lest they infect thee not only by touching, but also with their very eyes and breath. What is meant by *avoid*[1]? that is, not so much as to eat with any such. What importeth this *avoid?* 'If any man (quoth he) come unto you, and bring not this doctrine[2],' what doctrine but the Catholic and universal, and that which, with incorrupt tradition of the truth, hath continued one and the selfsame, through all successions of times, and that which shall continue for ever and ever? What then? 'Receive him not (quoth he) into the house, nor say God speed; for he that saith unto him God speed, communicateth with his wicked works.' 'Profane novelties of voices,' (quoth he;) what is *profane?* Those which have no holiness in them, nought of religion, wholly external to the sanctuary of the Church, which is the temple of God. 'Profane novelties of voices, (quoth he,) of voices, that is, novelties of doctrines, novelties of things, novelties of opinions, contrary to old usage, contrary to antiquity, which if we receive, of necessity the faith of our blessed ancestors, either all, or a great part of it, must be overthrown; the faithful people of all ages and times, all holy saints, all the chaste, all the continent, all the virgins, all the clergy, the deacons, the priests, so many thousands of confessors, so great armies of martyrs, so many famous and populous cities and commonwealths, so many islands, provinces, kings, tribes, kingdoms, nations; to conclude, almost now the whole world, incorporated by the Catholic faith to Christ their

[1] 1 Cor. v. 11. [2] 2 John 10, 11.

Head, must needs be said, so many hundreds of years, to have been ignorant, to have erred, to have blasphemed, to have believed they knew not what. 'Avoid (quoth he) profane novelties of voices,' to receive and follow which was never the custom of Catholics, but always of heretics. And, to say truth, what heresy hath ever burst forth, but under the name of some certain man, in some certain place, and at some certain time? Who ever set up any heresy, who first divided not himself from the consent of the universality and antiquity of the Catholic Church? Which to be true, examples do plainly prove. For who ever before that profane Pelagius presumed so much of man's free will, that he thought not the grace of God necessary to aid it in every particular good act? Who ever before his monstrous disciple Celestius, denied all mankind to be bound with the guilt of Adam's transgression? Who ever before sacrilegious Arius durst rend in pieces the unity of Trinity? Who ever before wicked Sabellius durst confound the Trinity of unity? Who ever before cruel Novatian affirmed God to be merciless, in that He had rather the death of a sinner than he should return and live? Who ever before Simon Magus (stricken by Apostolical censure, from whom that old sink of all filthiness came, by continual and secret succession, unto this last Priscilian) durst ever affirm that God our Creator was the Author of evil, that is, of our wickedness, impieties, and crimes; because God (as he said) so with His own hands made man's very nature, that by a certain proper motion and impulse of an enforced will, it can do nothing else, desire nothing else, but to sin,

because, being provoked and inflamed with the furious rage of all vices, it is with an insatiable desire carried away headlong into the pit and sink of all filthiness? Such examples are infinite, which for brevity sake I omit, by all which notwithstanding it appeareth plainly and clearly enough, that it is, as it were, a custom and law in all heresies, ever to take great pleasure in profane novelties, to loath the decrees of our forefathers, and to make shipwreck of faith, by oppositions of falsely-called knowledge; contrariwise that this is usually proper to all Catholics, to keep those things which the holy Fathers have left, and committed to their charge, to condemn profane novelties, and, as the Apostle hath said, and again forewarned, 'if any man shall preach otherwise than that which is received,' to anathematize him."—Ch. 27—34.

It is presumed that these extracts have sufficiently explained on what grounds we contend for that exact and strict creed, which we call orthodoxy. According to the doctrine of Vincentius, these grounds are twofold; the ground of Scripture, and the ground of Catholic tradition:—tradition first, then Scripture, in order of teaching; Scripture first, then tradition in point of authority; Scripture proving, tradition declaring; tradition interpreting Scripture, Scripture verifying tradition; and the personal mind and will of the individual being, at least in the theory, the ultimate court of appeal. But here one or two remarks suggest themselves, which will serve to bring this chapter to an end.

What the primitive Church declared to be the faith is plain enough, and a sure guide; but supposing a person alleges that he himself cannot see

that primitive doctrine in Scripture, what is to be said in answer to him? Are we to oblige him to accept that doctrine, whether he can see it in Scripture or not? or may he reject it till he sees it in Scripture? If he may reject it, what is the use of tradition? and if he must accept it, where is our reverence for Scripture?

I answer first, that though it is *abstractedly* the right of every individual to verify tradition by Scripture for himself, yet it is not so in *matter of fact*. It is as wrong for the generality of Christians to attempt it, as if there was no right at all. This is evident, even at first sight. Every one *may* plead his own cause, or prescribe for his neighbour,—that is, there is no law of the land against it; yet most men would but bring upon themselves vexation and ridicule if they attempted to do either. Now, it is as certain that the interpretation of Scripture requires qualifications for the due performance of it, as pleading or prescribing; knowledge of the languages, for instance, does not come by nature. It may, indeed, be urged that a divine illumination is promised us to lead us into truth; but this is not so easy of proof. Rather, it is evident, at first sight, that no promise of a guidance into truth has been made to each individual, educated or not, and that by means of the bare Greek or Hebrew text, which is the point which must be maintained; and moreover, as far as we may judge, Almighty God is not wont to effect supernaturally, what may be effected in the way of nature. Now, as to saving faith, considered as a *temper of mind*, this cannot be obtained, except *supernaturally*, on account of Adam's fall; therefore, for the obtaining of *it*, each

individual must ask, and may humbly expect the aid of divine grace. But saving *knowledge*, and of it I am now speaking, though it might be, and has sometimes been, supernaturally vouchsafed, as by inspiration, may also be gained by *natural* means, and therefore it is unlikely that it should be given by divine illumination. Catholic tradition does that which individual examination might do, were men inspired, or were they learned. And whereas they are ordinarily neither, this said private inquiry is, in the case of ordinary men, a mistake; and they who attempt to exercise it, are as reasonable and wise as any one else who goes out of his depth in a matter of this world.

In the next place, I would say that the juxtaposition of Scripture with tradition is ordinarily but a *negative* comparison of the latter with the former; though it may be, if it so happen, much more. I mean, it must be rather used to see that tradition is not wrong than to prove that it is right. This is the very meaning of the word "test" or "verification;" a test is satisfied if there is no actual disagreement, it does not ask for more. I must explain myself. Scripture has but one sense, undoubtedly; but it does not bring out upon its surface that one sense, in system and fulness; it only implies, and in a certain sense hides it. Be men ever so learned, it requires, in addition, a singularly unprejudiced and straightgoing mind to enter into Scripture as it is; to penetrate, and, as it were, become diffused throughout its recesses; and to apprehend "the whole counsel of God" contained in it. Most persons, whatever be their attainments and talents, will mistake its meaning, from not apprehending its entire meaning; and

that in opposite ways, from the accident of their opposite circumstances. Catholic tradition, then, has been mercifully given to supply to Scripture what it does not supply to itself, its true interpretation; and since, by the very hypothesis, it is to teach men what otherwise they might not infer from Scripture, there is nothing wonderful in its not at once annihilating, when given, all other inferences from Scripture. That which was before an unknown sense, does not at once become the only conceivable sense. Each man, before, had an interpretation of his own; those private interpretations remain; they do not become impossible, merely because there is found to be an older. The Catholic sense comes as a mediator or arbiter between disputants; and if it at once approved itself to any one party, it could not approve itself to the rest. Tradition supersedes, not reverses, the inferences of private inquirers. All that inquirers can demand to perceive, what they will perceive abundantly, is, that the Catholic sense is at least *one* of those senses which Scripture *may* have. They will indeed, in fact, perceive a great deal more; they will have a continually growing perception that it is the one only *true* sense; but, in order to their accepting it, it ought to be enough that they perceive that it is not *excluded* by the text of Scripture from being true. Few men, perhaps, if left to themselves, would see any one sense in Scripture, such, as to be sure that there *could* be none other but it; yet I suppose few men, indeed, if they examined diligently, but would also confess that, whatever other sense the sacred text *might* admit, it would, at least, admit the Catholic sense.

This, then, is the true mode of verifying or proving the tradition of the Church universal by Scripture, not to insist upon seeing *only* that *one* sense in the text of Scripture which the tradition assigns, but to examine whether there is anything in the text *inconsistent* with that one sense; and after all not to forget that there is a previous question, viz. whether the inquirer is duly qualified to be a judge of the sense either of tradition or of Scripture at all. And now, perhaps, the reader has heard enough of tradition.

CHAPTER XI.

APOLLINARIS.

"Behold, thou art wiser than Daniel; there is no secret that they can hide from thee. By thy great wisdom, and by thy traffic, hast thou increased thy riches, and thine heart is lifted up because of thy riches."

No passage of early ecclesiastical history is more painful and more instructive than the fall of Apollinaris into heresy. It becomes so from his high repute for learning and virtue, his intimacy with the great Catholic champions of his day, his former services to the Church, the temptation which seems to have led to it, the comparative insignificance of his error at first, yet the deplorable defection from the faith at which he, or at least his school, in no long time arrived. He began with the denial of our Lord's human soul, or rather of the intellectual part of it, which he considered was supplied by the Eternal Word incarnate. His object in this was to secure more completely the doctrine of the divinity of our Lord's person, to impress upon the mind that He who came on earth, who taught, acted, and suffered, was God, and not a man, in every thought, word, and deed, though acting through and in human nature; and he did so with an especial view of overthrowing Arianism, which denied our Lord's divinity. His

error, slight as it may appear in itself to orthodox Christians of this day, is, at first sight, in one point of view, even slighter still in the judgment of the theologian, who bears in mind that, according to the Catholic creed, our Lord, though perfect man, as far as nature is concerned, is not a man in the sense in which any given individual of the species is such, His person or subsistence not being human, but divine. Apollinaris seemed to say no more than this, that our Lord, not having a human person, had not that particular part of human nature in which personality may be considered to reside—viz., the rational part of the soul. Such was the seemingly trivial character of his doctrinal error; it ended, however, as the history of his school shows us, in no many years, and by no difficult or complicated process, when we come to inspect it, in a variety, or rather an alternative, of the most grievous and wildest tenets—in the belief, on the one hand, that Christ's body was only in appearance flesh; or, on the other, that it was created out of the very substance of Almighty God.

This was the incredible aberration of a grave, a literary, an aged man, some of whose writings are still extant, and evince a vigour and elegance of mind not inferior to any writer of his day. An impious and monstrous gnosticism seemed to revive, in the person of a dialectician, versed in all the accomplishments of Grecian philosophy and rhetoric. A brief sketch of his history, and of the conduct of the Church towards him, may not be out of place in this series of views, as they are intended to be, of ancient Christianity.

His father, who bore the same name, was a native of Alexandria, by profession a grammarian or schoolmaster; who, passing from Berytus to the Syrian Laodicea, married and settled there, and eventually rose to the presbyterate in the Church of that city. Apollinaris, the son, was born there in the early part of the fourth century, and was educated for the profession of rhetoric. After a season of suspense, as to the ultimate destination of his talents, he resolved on dedicating them to the service of the Church; and, after being admitted into reader's orders, he began to distinguish himself by his opposition to philosophical infidelity. His work against Porphyry, the most valuable and elaborate of his writings, was extended to as many as thirty books. During the reign of Julian, when the Christian schools were shut up, and the Christian youth debarred from the use of the classics, the two Apollinares, father and son, exerted themselves to supply the inconvenience thence resulting from their own resources. They wrote heroical pieces, odes, tragedies, and dialogues, after the style of Homer and Plato, and other standard authors, upon Christian subjects; and the younger wrote and dedicated to Julian a refutation of Paganism, on grounds of reason.

Nor did Apollinaris confine himself to the mere external defence of the Gospel, or the preparatory training of its disciples. His expositions on Scripture were the most numerous of his works; he especially excelled in eliciting and illustrating its sacred meaning, and had sufficient acquaintance with the Hebrew to enable him to translate or comment on the original text. There was scarcely a controversy

of the age, prolific as it was in heresies, into which he did not enter. He wrote against the Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, and Manichees; against Origen and Marcellus; and in defence of the Millenarians.

Such a man seemed to be raised up providentially for the Church's defence in an evil day; and for awhile he might be said resolutely and nobly to fulfil his divinely appointed destiny. The Church of Laodicea, with the other cities of Syria, was at the time in Arian possession; when the great Athanasius passed through on his return to Egypt, after his second exile (A.D. 348), Apollinaris communicated with him, and was in consequence put out of the Church by the bishop in possession. On the death of Constantius, the cause of orthodoxy prevailed; and Apollinaris was consecrated to that see, or to that in Asia Minor which bears the same name.

Such was the station, such the reputation of Apollinaris, at the date of the Council thereupon held at Alexandria, A.D. 362, for settling the disorders of the Church; and yet, in the proceedings of this celebrated assembly, the first intimation occurs of the existence of that doctrinal error by which he has been since known in history, though it is not there connected with his name. The troubles under Julian succeeded, and diverted the minds of all parties to other objects. The infant heresy slept till about the year 369; when it gave fresh evidence of its existence by the presence of a number of persons, scattered about Syria and Greece, and professing it in one form or other, and by the solemn meeting of a Council in the former country, in which its distinctive tenets were

condemned. We find that even at this date it had run the full length of the extravagances already specified; still the name of Apollinaris is not connected with them. The Council, as I have said, was held in Syria, but the heresy which occasioned it had already, it seems, extended into Greece; for a communication which the assembled bishops addressed to Athanasius elicited from him a letter, still extant, addressed to Epictetus, bishop of Corinth, who had also written to him on the subject. This letter, whether from tenderness to Apollinaris, or from difficulty in bringing the heresy home to him, still does not mention his name. A work written by Athanasius against the heresy, at the very end of his life, with the keenness and richness of thought which distinguish his writings generally, is equally silent; as are two letters to friends about the same date, which touch more or less on the theological points in question. All these treatises seem to be forced from the writer, and are characterized by considerable energy of expression: as if the Catholics were really perplexed with the novel statements of doctrine, and doubtful how Athanasius would meet them, or at least required his authority before pronouncing upon them; and, on the other hand, as if the writer himself were fearful of conniving at them, whatever private reasons he might have for wishing to pass them over. Yet there is nothing in the history or documents of the times to lead one to suppose that more than a general suspicion attached to Apollinaris; and, if we may believe his own statement, Athanasius died in persuasion of his orthodoxy. A letter is extant, written by Apolli-

naris on this subject, in which he speaks of the kind intercourse he had with the Primate of Egypt, and of their agreement in faith, as acknowledged by Athanasius himself. He claims him as his master, and at the same time slightly hints that there had been points to settle between them, in which he himself had given way. In another, written to an Egyptian bishop, he seems to refer to the very epistle to Epictetus noticed above, expressing his approbation of it. It is known, moreover, that Athanasius gave letters of introduction to the western bishops, to Timotheus, Apollinaris' intimate friend, and afterwards the most extravagant teacher of his sect, on the ground of his controversial talents against the Arians.

Athanasius died in A.D. 371 or 373; and that bereavement of the Church was followed, among its calamities, by the open avowal of heresy on the part of Apollinaris. In a letter already referred to, he claims Athanasius as agreeing with him, yet proceeds to profess one of the very tenets against which Athanasius had written. In saying this, I have no intention of accusing so considerable a man of that disingenuousness which is almost the characteristic mark of heresy. It was natural that Athanasius should exercise an influence over his mind; and it was as natural that, when his fellow-champion was taken to his rest, he should find himself able to breathe more freely, yet be unwilling to own it. While indulging the speculations of a private judgment, he might still endeavour to persuade himself that he was not outstepping the range which Scripture had prescribed, and the Church Catholic witnessed. On the other

hand, it appears that the ecclesiastical authorities of the day, even when he professed his heresy, were for awhile incredulous about the fact, from their recollection of his former services and faith, and the hope that he was but carried on into verbal extravagances by his opposition to Arianism. Thus they were as unwilling to denounce him as a heretic, as he to confess it. Nay, even when he had lost shame, attacked the Catholics with violence, and formed his disciples into a sect, not even then was he himself at once publicly animadverted on, though his creed was anathematized. His first condemnation was at Rome, several years after Athanasius' death, in company with Timotheus, his disciple. In the General Council of Constantinople, several years later, his sect is mentioned as existing, with directions how to receive back into the Church those who applied for reconciliation. He outlived this Council about ten years; his sect lasted only twenty years beyond him; but in that short time it had split into three distinct persuasions, of various degrees of heterodoxy, and is said to have fallen more or less into the errors of Judaism.

Such is the outline of a melancholy history. We may fitly conclude our review of it by attending to what contemporary writers say of him and his sect. Epiphanius speaks thus mournfully :—

"That aged and venerable man, who was ever so singularly dear to us, and to the holy father, Athanasius of blessed memory, and to all orthodox men, Apollinaris of Laodicea, he it was who originally struck out and propagated this doctrine. And at first, when we were assured of it by some of his dis-

ciples, we disbelieved that such a man could admit such an error into his walk, and patiently waited in hope, till we might ascertain the state of the case. For we argued that his youths, who came to us, not entering into the profound views of so learned and clear-minded a master, had invented these statements of themselves, not learned them from him. For there were many points in which those who came to us were at variance with each other: some of them ventured to say that Christ had brought down His body from above (and this strange theory, admitted into the mind, developed itself into worse notions); others of them denied that Christ had taken a soul; and some ventured to say that Christ's body was consubstantial with the Godhead, and thereby caused great confusion in the East."—*Hær.* lxxvii. 2.

He proceeds afterwards:—

"Full of distress became our life at that time, that between brethren so exemplary as the forementioned, a quarrel should at all have arisen, that the enemy of man might work divisions among us. And great, my brethren, is the mischief done to the mind from such a cause. For were no question ever raised on the subject, the matter would be most simple: (for what gain has accrued to the world from such novel doctrine, or what benefit to the Church? rather has it not been an injury, as causing hatred and dissension?) but when the question was raised, it became formidable; it did not tend to good; for whether a man disallows this particular point, or even the slightest, still it is a denial. For we must not, even in a trivial matter, turn aside from the path of truth. No one of the ancients ever maintained it—prophet,

or apostle, or evangelist, or commentator—down to these our times, when this so perplexing doctrine proceeded from the most learned man aforesaid. His was a mind of no common cultivation; first in the preliminaries of literature in Greek education, then as a master of dialectics and argumentation. Moreover, he was most grave in his whole life, and reckoned among the very first of those who ever deserved the love of the orthodox, and so continued till the maintenance of this doctrine. Nay, he had undergone banishment, for not submitting to the Arians;—but why enlarge on it? It afflicted us much, and gave us a sorrowful time, as our enemy is ever accustomed to do."—*Ibid.* 24.

I have already noticed, in a former chapter, that St. Basil got into trouble from a supposed intimacy with Apollinaris. He had written one letter to him on an indifferent matter, in 356, when he himself was as yet a layman, and Apollinaris orthodox, and scarcely in orders. This was magnified by Eustathius into a correspondence and intercommunion between the archbishop and the heresiarch. As in reality he knew very little even of his works, the description which the following passages give is valuable, as being, in fact, a sort of popular testimony to Apollinaris, more than an individual opinion. Basil wrote the former in defence of himself; in the latter of the two, other errors of Apollinaris are mentioned, besides those to which I have had occasion to allude, for errors seldom are found single. "For myself," says Basil, "I never indeed considered Apollinaris as an enemy; nay, there are respects in which I reverence him; however, I did

not so connect myself with him, as to make myself answerable for his alleged faults, considering, too, that I have a complaint of my own against him, on reading some of his compositions. I hear, indeed, that he is become the most copious of all writers; yet I have fallen in with but few of his works, for I have not leisure to search into such, and besides, I am difficult of introduction to recent writers, being hindered by bodily health from continuing even the study of inspired Scripture laboriously, and as is fitting."—*Ep.* 244, § 3.

The other runs thus:—"After Eustathius comes Apollinaris; he, too, no slight disturber of the Church; for having a facility in writing, and a tongue which served him on every subject, he has filled the world with his compositions, despising the warning, 'Beware of making many books,' because in the many are many faults. For how is it possible, in much speaking, to escape sin? First, there are his theological opinions, resting not on proofs from Scripture, but on human considerations. Again, there are his views on the resurrection, made up of fables, or rather of Judaisms; in which he says, that we shall again turn to the legal worship: again be circumcised, keep Sabbath, abstain from meat, offer sacrifices to God, worship in Jerusalem at the temple, and, in short, become Jews for Christians. What can be more absurd? or rather, more foreign to the Evangelical doctrine? Also, his views of the Incarnation have caused such confusion among my brethren, that few of those who have read them, preserve the ancient marks of piety, but the mass, attending to novelties, have turned aside to ques-

tions, and contentious speculations of these unprofitable theories."—*Ep.* 264, § 4.

It is a solemn and pregnant fact, that two of the most zealous and forward of Athanasius's companions in his good fight against Arianism, Marcellus and Apollinaris, fell away into heresies of their own—Marcellus seems to have denied our Lord's personality, Apollinaris His humanity. "Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall."

Alas, my brother! round thy tomb
In sorrow kneeling, and in fear,
We read the pastor's doom
Who speaks, and will not hear.

The gray-haired saint may fail at last,
The surest guide a wanderer prove,
Death only binds us fast
To the bright shore of love.

CHAPTER XII.

AUGUSTINE AND THE VANDALS.

"Lo, Eli sat on a seat by the way-side watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God."

I HAVE lately directed the reader's attention to the labours of a missionary bishop, who restored the light of Christianity where it had long been obscured. In my present, I will put before him, by way of contrast, a scene of the overthrow of religion, the extinction of a candlestick, effected, too, by champions of the same heretical creed which Gregory successfully resisted. It will be found in the history of the last days of the great Augustine, bishop of Hippo, in Africa.

Though it may not be given us to appropriate the prophecies of the Apocalypse to the real events to which they respectively belong, yet it is impossible to read its inspired pages, and then to turn to the history of the dissolution of the Roman empire, without seeing a remarkable adaptation, on the whole, between the calamities of that period and the sacred prediction. There is a plain announcement in the inspired page, of "Woe, woe, woe, to the inhabiters of the earth;" an announcement of "hail and fire mingled with blood," the conflagration of "trees and green grass," the destruction of ships, the darkening of the sun, and the poisoning of the waters

over a third of the earth. There is a clear prophecy of revolutions on the face of the earth and in the structure of society. And on the other hand, let us observe how fully such general foretokenings are borne out among other passages of history, in the Vandalic conquest of Africa.

The coast of Africa, between the great desert and the Mediterranean, was one of the most fruitful and opulent portions of the Roman world. The eastern extremity of it was more especially connected with the empire, containing in it Carthage, Hippo, and other towns, celebrated as being sees of the Christian Church, as well as places of civil importance. In the spring of the year 428, the Vandals, Arians by creed, and barbarians by birth and conduct, crossed the Straits of Gibraltar, and proceeded along this fertile district, bringing with them devastation and captivity on every side. They abandoned themselves to the most savage cruelties and excesses. They pillaged, ravaged, burned, massacred all that came in their way, sparing not even the fruit trees, which might have afforded some poor food to the remnant of the population, who had escaped from them into caves, the recesses of the mountains, or into vaults. Twice did this desolating pestilence sweep over the face of the country.

The fury of the Vandals was especially exercised towards the memorials of religion. Churches, cemeteries, monasteries, were objects of their fiercest hatred and most violent assaults. They broke into the places of worship, cut to pieces all internal decorations, and then set fire to them. They tortured bishops and clergy with the hope of obtaining trea-

sure. The names of some of the victims of their ferocity are preserved. Mansuetus, bishop of Utica, was burnt alive; Papinianus, bishop of Vite, was laid upon red-hot plates of iron. This was near upon the time when the third General Council was assembling at Ephesus, which, from the insecure state of the road, and the universal misery which reigned among them, the African bishops were prevented from attending. The Clergy, the religious brotherhoods, the holy virgins, were scattered all over the country. The daily service was stopped, the sacraments could not be obtained, the festivals of the Church passed unnoticed. At length, only three cities remained unvisited by the general desolation,—Carthage, Hippo, and Cirtha.

Hippo was the see of St. Austin, at that time seventy-four years of age (forty almost of which had been passed in ministerial labours), and warned, by the decay of nature, of the approach of dissolution. It was as if the light of prosperity and peace were fading away from the African Church, as sank the bodily powers of its great earthly ornament and stay. At this time, when the terrors of the barbaric invasion spread on all sides, a bishop wrote to him to ask whether it was allowable in the ruler of a Church to leave the scene of his pastoral duties in order to save his life. Different opinions had heretofore been expressed on this question. In Augustine's own country Tertullian had maintained that flight was unlawful, but he was a Montanist at the time. On the other hand, Cyprian had actually fled, and had defended his conduct when censured by the clergy of Rome. His contemporaries, Diony-

sius of Alexandria, and Gregory of Neocæsarea, had fled also; as had Polycarp before them, and Athanasius after them.

Athanasius's reasons for flight, in his published defence of himself, are as follows:—First, he observes, it has the sanction of numerous Scripture precedents. Thus, in the instance of confessors under the old covenant, Jacob fled from Esau, Moses from Pharaoh, David from Saul, Elijah concealed himself from Ahab three years, and the sons of the prophets were hid by Obadiah in a cave from Jezebel. In like manner under the Gospel, the disciples hid themselves for fear of the Jews, and St. Paul was let down in a basket over the wall at Damascus. On the other hand, no instance can be adduced of over-boldness and headstrong daring in the saints of Scripture. Christ Himself is the chief exemplar of flying from persecution. As a child in arms He had to flee into Egypt. When He returned, He still shunned Judea, and retired to Nazareth. After raising Lazarus, on the Jews seeking His life, "He did not any more walk openly among them," but retreated to the neighbourhood of the wilderness. When they took up stones to cast at Him, He hid Himself; when they attempted to cast Him down headlong, He made His way through them; when He heard of the Baptist's death, He retired across the lake into a desert place, apart. If it be said that He did so, because His time was not yet come, and that when it was come, He delivered up Himself, we must ask, in reply, how a man can know that his time is come, so as to have a right to do the same. And as not knowing, we must have patience, and, till God by His own act, determines the time, we must "wan-

der in sheep-skins and goat-skins," rather than take the matter into our own hands; as David, in opposite circumstances, left Saul in the hands of God, whether He would "smite him, or his day should come to die, or he should descend into battle and perish."

If God's servants, proceeds Athanasius, have ever presented themselves before their persecutors, it was at God's command: thus Elijah showed himself to Ahab; so did the prophet from Judah, to Jeroboam; and St. Paul appealed to Cæsar. Flight, so far from implying cowardice, requires often greater courage than remaining. It is a greater trial of the heart. Death is an end of all trouble; he who flees is ever expecting death, and dies daily. Job's life was not to be touched by Satan, yet was not his fortitude shown in what he suffered? Exile is full of miseries. The after-conduct of the saints showed they had not fled for fear. Jacob, on his death-bed, contemned death, and exultingly blessed the twelve Patriarchs; Moses returned, and presented himself before Pharaoh; David was a valiant warrior; Elijah rebuked Ahab and Ahaziah; Peter and Paul, who had once hid themselves, offered themselves to martyrdom at Rome. And so acceptable was the previous flight of these men to the Almighty God, that we read of His showing them some special favour during it. Jacob had the vision of Angels; Moses saw the burning bush: David wrote his prophetic Psalms; Elijah raised the dead, and at length gathered the people on Mount Carmel. How would the Gospel ever have been preached throughout the world, if the Apostles had not fled? And,

since their time, those, too, who have become martyrs, at first fled; or, if they advanced to meet their persecutors, it was by some secret suggestion of the Divine Spirit. But, above all, while these instances abundantly illustrate the rule of duty in persecution, and the *animus* necessary in obeying it, we have that duty itself declared in a plain precept by no other than our Lord: "When they persecute you in one city," He says, "flee ye unto another;" and "let them that are in Judea flee to the mountains."

Thus argues the great Athanasius, living in spirit with the saints departed, while full of labour and business here on earth. For the arguments on the other side, let us turn to a writer, not less vigorous in mind, but less subdued. Thus writes Tertullian on the same subject, then a Montanist, a century and a half earlier:—Nothing happens, he says, without God's will. Persecution is sent by Him, to put His servants to the test; to divide between good and bad: it is a trial; what man has any right to interfere? He who gives the prize, alone can assign the combat. Persecution is more than permitted, it is actually appointed by Almighty God. It does the Church much good, as leading Christians to increased seriousness while it lasts. It comes and goes at God's ordering. Satan could not touch Job, except so far as God gave permission. He could not touch the Apostles, except as far as an opening was allowed in the words, "Satan hath desired to have you, but I have prayed for thee," Peter, "and when thou art converted strengthen thy brethren." We pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil;" why, if we may deliver ourselves? Satan

is permitted access to us, either for punishment, as in Saul's case, or for our chastisement. Since the persecution comes from God, we may not lawfully avoid it, nor can we avoid it. We cannot, because He is all powerful; we must not, because He is all good. We should leave the matter entirely to God. As to the command of fleeing from city to city, this was temporary. It was intended to secure the preaching of the Gospel to the nations. While the Apostles preached to the Jews,—till they had preached to the Gentiles,—they were to flee; but one might as well argue, that we now are not to go "into the way of the Gentiles," but to confine ourselves to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," as that we are now to "flee from city to city." Nor, indeed, was going from city to city a flight; it was a continued preaching; not an accident, but a rule: whether persecuted or not, they were to go about; and before they had gone through the cities of Israel, the Lord was to come. The command contemplated only those very cities. If St. Paul escaped out of Damascus by night, yet afterwards, against the prayers of the disciples and the prophecy of Agabus, he went up to Jerusalem. Thus the command to flee did not even last through the lifetime of the Apostles; and, indeed, why should God introduce persecution, if He bids us retire from it? This is imputing inconsistency to His acts. If we want texts to justify remaining, He says, "Whoso shall confess Me before men, I will confess him before My Father." "Blessed are they that are persecuted;" "He who shall endure to the end, the same shall be saved;" "Fear not them that kill the body;" "Whoso taketh not up his cross and fol-

loweth Me, cannot be My disciple." How are these texts fulfilled when a man flies? Christ, who is our pattern, did not more than pray, "If it be possible, let the cup pass:" we, too, should both stay and pray as He did. And it is expressly told us, that "We also should lay down our lives for the brethren." Again, it is said, "Perfect love casteth out fear;" he who flees, fears; he who fears, "is not perfect in love." The Greek proverb is sometimes urged, "He who flees, will fight another day;" yes, and he may flee another day, also. Again, if bishops, priests, and deacons flee, why must the laity stay? or must they flee also? "The good shepherd," on the contrary, "layeth down his life for the sheep;" whereas, the bad shepherd "seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth." At no time, as Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah tell us, is the flock in greater danger of being scattered, than when it loses its shepherd. Tertullian ends thus:—"This doctrine, my brother, perhaps appears to you hard; nay, intolerable. But recollect that God has said, 'Whoso receives, let him receive it;' that is, he who receives not, let him depart. He who fears to suffer, cannot belong to Him who has suffered. He who fears not to suffer, is perfect in love, that is, of God. Many are called, few are chosen. Not he who would walk the broad way, is sought by God, but he who walks the narrow." Thus the ingenious and vehement Tertullian.

With these remarks for and against flight in persecution, we shall be prepared to listen to Augustine on the subject; I have said, it was brought before him by a brother bishop, with reference to the

impending visitation of the barbarians. His answer happily is preserved to us, and extracts from it shall now be set before the reader.

"TO HIS HOLY BROTHER AND FELLOW-BISHOP, HONORATUS, AUGUSTINE SENDS HEALTH IN THE LORD.

"I thought the copy of my letter to our brother Quodvultdeus, which I sent to you, would have been sufficient, dear brother, without the task you put on me of counselling you on the proper course to pursue under our existing dangers. It was certainly a short letter; yet I included every question which it was necessary to ask and answer, when I said that no persons were to be hindered retiring to such fortified places as they were able and desirous to secure; while, on the other hand, we might not break the bonds of our ministry, by which the love of Christ has engaged us not to desert the Church, where we are bound to serve. The following is what I laid down in the letter I refer to:—'It remains, then,' I say, 'that, be God's people where we are, ever so little, yet, if it does stay, we, whose ministration is necessary to its staying, must say to the Lord, 'Thou art our strong rock and house of defence.''

"But you tell me that this view is not sufficient for you, from an apprehension lest we should be running counter to our Lord's command and example, to fly from city to city. Yet is it conceivable that He meant, that our flocks, whom He bought with His own blood, should be deprived of that necessary ministration without which they cannot

live? Is He a precedent for this, who was carried in flight into Egypt by his parents when but a child, before He had formed Churches which we can talk of His leaving? Or, when St. Paul was let down in a basket through a window, lest the enemy should seize him, and so escaped his hands, was the Church of that place bereft of its necessary ministration, seeing there were other brethren stationed there to fulfil what was necessary? Evidently it was their wish that he, who was the direct object of the persecutors' search, should preserve himself for the sake of the Church. Let, then, the servants of Christ, the ministers of His word and sacrament, do in such cases, as He enjoined or permitted. Let such of them, by all means, fly from city to city, as are special objects of persecution; so that they who are not thus attacked desert not the Church, but give meat to those their fellow-servants, who they know cannot live without it. But in a case when all classes —I mean bishops, clergy, and people—are in some common danger, let not those who need the aid of others, be deserted by those whom they need. Either let one and all remove into some fortified place, or, if any are obliged to remain, let them not be left by those who have to supply their ecclesiastical necessity, so that they may survive in common, or suffer in common, what their Father decrees they should undergo.

"I understand that a certain bishop has argued, that if our Lord has enjoined flight upon us in persecutions which may ripen into martyrdom, much more is it necessary to flee from barren sufferings in a barbarian and hostile invasion. This is true

and reasonable; but in the case of such as have no ecclesiastical office to tie them. For he who awaits, when he might escape, the murderous career of a foe, lest he should desert Christ's ministry, without which, men can neither become nor continue Christians, has attained a greater fruit of charity than he who, after flying not for the brethren's sake, but for himself, and then, being captured, confesses Christ, and accepts martyrdom.

"Why should men make no question about obeying the precept about fleeing from city to city, and yet have no dread of 'the hireling who seeth the wolf coming, and fleeth, because he careth not for the sheep?' Why do they not try to reconcile (as they assuredly can) these two incontrovertible declarations of our Lord, one of which suffers and commands flight, the other arraigns and condemns it? And what other mode is there of reconciling them, than that which I have above maintained? viz., that we, the ministers of Christ, when under the pressure of persecution, are then at liberty to leave our posts, when no flock is left for us to serve; or again, when, though there be a flock, yet there are others to supply our necessary ministry, who have not the same reason for flying, as in the case of St. Paul; or, again, of the holy Athanasius, bishop of Alexandria, who was especially sought after by the emperor Constantius, while the Catholic people, who remained together in Alexandria, were in no measure deserted by the other ministers. But when the people remain, and the ministers flee, and the ministration is suspended, what is that but the guilty flight of hirelings, who care not for the sheep?

For then the wolf will come, not man, but the devil, who is used to persuade such believers to apostasy who are bereft of the daily ministration of the Lord's Body; and by your, not knowledge, but ignorance of duty, the weak brother will perish, for whom Christ died.

"Let us only consider, when matters come to an extremity of danger, and there is no longer any means of escape, how persons flock together to the Church, of both sexes, and all ages, begging for baptism, or reconciliation, or for even the observance of penance, and one and all of them for consolation, and the consecration and application of the sacraments. Now, if ministers are wanting, what ruin awaits those who depart from this life unregenerate, or unabsolved? Consider the grief of their believing relatives, who will not have them as partakers with themselves in the rest of eternal life; consider the anguish of the whole multitude, nay, the cursings of some of them, at the absence of ministration and ministers.

"It may be said, however, that the ministers of God ought to avoid such imminent perils, in order to preserve themselves for the profit of the Church for more tranquil times. I grant it where others are present to supply the ecclesiastical ministry, as in the case of Athanasius. How necessary it was to the Church, how beneficial, that such a man should remain in the flesh, the Catholic faith bears witness, which was maintained against the Arians by his voice and love. But when there is a common danger, and when there is rather reason to apprehend lest a man should be thought to flee

from purpose of prudence, but from dread of dying, and when the example of flight does more harm than the service of living does good, it is by no means to be done. To be brief, holy David withdrew himself from the hazard of war, lest perchance he should 'quench the light of Israel,' at the instance of his people, not on his own motion. Otherwise, he would have occasioned many imitators of an inactivity which they had ascribed, not to regard for the welfare of others, but to cowardice.

"There is another question which demands consideration. If there is a plain expedience in some ministers flying at the prospect of a sweeping calamity, in order that the remnant of the flock, when the slaughter is over, may still have those who can minister to them, what is to be done in a case where all are likely to perish, unless some escape? What, for instance, if the destruction rages only with the view of reaching the ministers of the Church? O, that there may be then a quarrel between God's ministers, *who* are to remain, and *who* to flee, lest the Church should be deserted, whether by all fleeing or all dying. Surely there will ever be such a quarrel, where each party burns in its own charity, yet indulges the charity of the other. In such a difficulty, the lot seems the fairest decision, in default of others. God judges better than man in perplexities of this sort; whether it be His will to reward the holier among them with the crown of martyrdom and to spare the weak, or again, to strengthen the latter to endure evil, removing those from life whom the Church of God can spare the better. Should it, however, seem inexpedient to cast lots,—a measure for which

I cannot bring precedent,—at least, let no one's flight be the cause of the Church's losing those ministrations which, in such dangers, are so necessary and so imperative. Let no one make himself an exception, on the plea of certain grace, which gives him a claim to life, and therefore to flight.

"It is sometimes supposed, that bishops and clergy, remaining at their posts in dangers of this kind, deceive their stocks into staying, by their example. But it is easy for us to remove this objection or imputation, by frankly telling them not to be misled by our remaining. 'We are remaining for your sake,' we must say, 'lest you should fail to obtain whatever ministration we know to be necessary to your salvation in Christ. Make your escape, and you will then set us free.' The occasion for saying this is when there seems some real advantage in retiring to a safer position. Should all or some make answer, 'We are in His hands from whose anger no one can flee anywhere; whose mercy every one may find everywhere, though he stir not, whether some necessary tie detains him, or the uncertainty of safe escape deters him;' most undoubtedly such persons are not to be left destitute of Christian ministrations.

"I have written these lines, dearest brother, in truth, as I think—certainly in love—by way of reply, since you have consulted me; but not as dictating, if, perchance, you may find some better view to guide you. However, better we cannot do in these perils than pray the Lord our God to have mercy upon us."—*Ep.* 228.

The clear-sighted perception of duty, the calm faith, and the single-minded obedience which this

letter exhibits, were fully maintained in the conduct of the far-famed writer, in the events which followed. It was written on the first entrance of the Vandals into Africa, about two years before they laid siege to Hippo; and during this interval of dreadful suspense and excitement to the Church, as well as of actual suffering, amid the desolation of the Church around him, with the prospect of his own personal trials, we find this unwearied teacher carrying on his works of love by pen, and word of mouth,—eagerly, as if his time were short, but tranquilly, as if it were a season of prosperity. He commenced a fresh work against the opinions of Julian, a friend of his, who, beginning to run well, had unhappily taken up a bold profession of Pelagianism; wrote a treatise on Predestination, at the suggestion of his friends, to meet the objections urged against former works of his on the same subject; sustained a controversy with the Arians; and began a history of heresies. What makes Augustine's diligence at this season, in the duties of his episcopate, more remarkable is, his being actually engaged at the same time in political affairs, as a confidential friend and counsellor of Boniface, the governor of Africa (who had first invited and then opposed the entrance of the Vandals), and accordingly being in circumstances especially likely to unsettle and agitate his mind.

At length events hastened on to a close. Fugitive multitudes betook themselves to Hippo. Boniface threw himself into it. The Vandals appeared before it, and laid siege to it. Meanwhile, Augustine fell ill. He had about him many of the African bishops, and among other friends, Possidius, whose account

of his last hour is preserved to us. "We used continually to converse together," says Possidius, "about the misfortunes in which we were involved, and contemplated God's tremendous judgments which were before our eyes, saying, 'Righteous art Thou, O Lord, and true are thy judgments.' One day, at meal time, as we talked together, he said, 'Know ye that in this our present calamity, I pray God to vouchsafe to rescue this besieged city, or (if otherwise) to give his servants strength to hear His will, or, at least, to take me to Himself out of this world.' We followed his advice, and both ourselves, and our friends, and the whole city offered up the same prayer with him. On the third month of the siege, he was seized with a fever and took to his bed, and was reduced to the extreme of sickness."

Thus, the latter part of his prayer was put in train for accomplishment, as the former part was subsequently granted by the retreat of the enemy from Hippo. But to continue our narrative:—"He had been used to say, in his familiar conversation, that after receiving baptism, even approved Christians and priests ought not to depart from the body without a fitting and sufficient course of penitence. Accordingly, in the last illness, of which he died, he set himself to write out the special penitential psalms of David, and to place them four by four against the wall, so that, as he lay in bed, in the days of his sickness, he could see them. And so he used to read and weep abundantly. And lest his attention should be distracted by any one, about ten days before his death, he begged us who were with him to hinder persons entering his room except at the

times when his medical attendants came to see him, or his meals were brought him. This was strictly attended to, and all that time given to prayer. Till this last illness, he had been able to preach the word of God in the church without intermission with energy and boldness, with healthy mind and judgment. He slept with his fathers in a good old age, sound in limb, unimpaired in sight and hearing, and, as it is written, while we stood by, beheld, and prayed with him. We took part in the sacrifice to God at his funeral, and so buried him."

Though the Vandals failed in their first attack upon Hippo, during Augustine's last illness, they renewed it shortly after his death, under more favourable circumstances. Boniface was defeated in the field, and retired to Italy; and the inhabitants of Hippo left their city. The Vandals entered and burned it, excepting the library of Augustine, which was providentially preserved.

The desolation which, at that era, swept over the face of Africa, was completed by the subsequent invasion of the Saracens. Its five hundred churches are no more. The voyager gazes on the sullen rocks which line its coast, and discovers no token of Christianity to cheer the gloom. Hippo has ceased to be an episcopal city; but its great teacher, though dead, yet speaks; his voice is gone out into all lands, and his words unto the ends of the world. He needs no dwelling-place, whose home is the Catholic Church; he fears no barbarian or heretical desolation, whose creed is to last unto the end.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONVERSION OF AUGUSTINE.

"Thou hast chastised me and I was chastised, as a bullock unaccustomed to the yoke. Turn Thou me and I shall be turned, for Thou art the Lord my God. Surely after that I was turned, I repented, and after that I was instructed, I smote upon my thigh. I was ashamed, yea was confounded, because I did bear the reproach of my youth."

A CHANCE reader may ask, What was the history of that celebrated Father whose death was the subject of my last chapter? What had his life been, what his early years, what his labours? Surely he was no ordinary man, whose end, in all its circumstances, is so impressive. We may answer in a few words, that Augustine was the son of a pious mother, who had the pain of witnessing, for many years, his wanderings in doubt and unbelief, who prayed incessantly for his conversion, and at length was blessed with the sight of it. From early youth he had given himself up to a course of life quite inconsistent with the profession of a catechumen, into which he had been admitted in infancy. How far he had fallen into any profligate excesses is doubtful. He uses language of himself which may have the worst of meanings, but may, on the other hand, be but the expression of deep repentance and spiritual sensitiveness. In his

twentieth year he embraced the Manichæan heresy, in which he continued nine years. Towards the end of that time, leaving Africa, his native country, first for Rome, then for Milan, he fell in with St. Ambrose; and his conversion and baptism followed in the course of his thirty-fourth year. This memorable event, his conversion, is celebrated in the Latin Church from early times, being the only event of the kind thus distinguished, excepting the conversion of St. Paul.

His life had been for many years one of great anxiety and discomfort, the life of one dissatisfied with himself, and despairing of finding the truth. Men of ordinary minds are not so circumstanced as to feel the misery of irreligion. That misery consists in the perverted and discordant action of the various faculties and functions of the soul, which have lost their legitimate governing power, and are unable to regain it except at the hands of their Maker. Now the run of irreligious men do not suffer in any great degree from this disorder, and are not miserable; they have neither great talents nor strong passions; they have not within them the materials of rebellion in such measure as to threaten their peace. They follow their own wishes, they yield to the bent of the moment, they act on inclination, not on principle, but their motive powers are neither strong nor various enough to be troublesome. Their minds are in no sense under rule; but anarchy is not in their case a state of confusion, but of deadness; like what is said to be the internal condition of eastern cities and provinces at present, in which, though the government is weak or null, the body politic goes on without any great embarrassment or collision of its

members one with another, by the force of inveterate habit. It is very different when the moral and intellectual principles are vigorous, active, and developed. Then, if the governing power be feeble, all the subordinates are in the position of rebels in arms; and what the state of a mind is under such circumstances, the analogy of a civil community will suggest to us. Then we have before us the melancholy spectacle of high aspirations without an aim, a hunger of the soul unsatisfied, and a never-ending restlessness and inward warfare of its various faculties. Gifted minds, if not submitted to the rightful authority of religion, become the most unhappy and the most mischievous. They need at once an object to feed upon, and the power of self-mastery; and the love of their Maker, and nothing but it, supplies both the one and the other. We have seen in our own day, in the case of a popular poet, an impressive instance of a great genius throwing off the fear of God, seeking for happiness in the creature, roaming unsatisfied from one object to another, breaking his mind upon itself, and bitterly confessing and imparting his wretchedness to all around him. I have no wish at all to compare him to St. Augustine; indeed, if we may say it without presumption, the very different termination of their trial seems to indicate some great difference in their respective modes of encountering it. The one dies of premature decay, to all appearance, a hardened infidel; and if he is still to have a name, will live in the mouths of men by writings at once blasphemous and immoral: the other is a Saint and Doctor of the Church. Each makes confessions, the one to the saints, the other to the powers of evil.

And does not the difference of the two discover itself in some measure even to our eyes in the very history of their wanderings and pinings? At least, there is no appearance in St. Augustine's case of that dreadful haughtiness, sullenness, love of singularity, vanity, irritability, and misanthropy, which were too certainly the characteristics of our own countryman. Augustine was, as his early history shows, a man of affectionate and tender feelings, and open and amiable temper; and, above all, he sought for some excellence external to his own mind, instead of concentrating all his contemplations on himself.

But let us consider what his misery was;—it was that of a mind imprisoned, solitary, and wild with spiritual thirst; and forced to betake itself to the strongest excitements, by way of relieving itself of the rush and violence of feelings of which the knowledge of the Divine Perfections was the true and sole sustenance. He ran into excess, not from love of it, but from this fierce fever of mind. "I sought what I might love[1]," he says in his Confessions, "in love with loving, and safety I hated, and a way without snares. For within me was a famine of that inward food, Thyself, my God; yet through that famine I was not hungered, but was without all longing for incorruptible sustenance, not because filled therewith, but the more empty, the more I loathed it. For this cause my soul was sickly and full of sores; it miserably cast itself forth, desiring to be scraped by the touch of objects of sense."—iii. 1. "O foolish man that I then was," he says elsewhere,

[1] Most of these translations are from the Oxford edition of 1838.

"enduring impatiently the lot of man! So I fretted, sighed, wept, was distracted; had neither rest nor counsel. For I bore about a shattered and bleeding soul, impatient of being borne by me, yet where to repose it I found not; not in calm groves, nor in games and music, nor in fragrant spots, nor in curious banquetings, nor in indulgence of the bed and the couch, nor, finally, in books or poesy found it repose. All things looked ghastly, yea, the very light. In groaning and tears alone found I a little refreshment. But when my soul was withdrawn from them, a huge load of misery weighed me down. To Thee, O Lord, it ought to have been raised, for Thee to lighten; I knew it, but neither could nor would; the more, since when I thought of Thee, Thou wast not to me any solid or substantial thing. For Thou wert not Thyself, but a mere phantom, and my error was my God. If I offered to discharge my load thereon, that it might rest, it glided through the void, and came rushing down against me; and I had remained to myself a hapless spot, where I could neither be, nor be from thence. For whither should my heart flee from my heart? whither should I flee from myself? whither not follow myself? And yet I fled out of my country; for so should mine eyes look less for *him*, when they were not wont to see him."—iv. 12.

He is speaking in this last sentence of a friend he had lost, whose death-bed was very remarkable, and whose dear familiar name he apparently has not courage to mention. "He had grown up of a child with me," he says, "and we had been both schoolfellows and playfellows." Augustine had misled him

into the heresy which he had adopted himself, and when he grew to have more and more sympathy in Augustine's pursuits, the latter united himself to him in a close intimacy. Scarcely had he thus given him his heart, when God took him. "Thou tookest him," he says, "out of this life, when he had scarce completed one whole year of my friendship, sweet to me above all sweetness in that life of mine. A long while, sore sick of a fever, he lay senseless in the dews of death, and being given over, he was baptized unwitting; I, meanwhile, little regarding or presuming that his soul would retain rather what it had received of me, than what was wrought on his unconscious body." The Manichees, it should be observed, rejected baptism. He proceeds: "But it proved far otherwise; for he was refreshed and restored. Forthwith, as soon as I could speak with him, (and I could as soon as he was able, for I never left him, and we hung but too much upon each other,) I essayed to jest with him, as though he would jest with me at that baptism which he had received, when utterly absent in mind and feeling, but had now understood that he had received. But he shrunk from me, as from an enemy; and with a wonderful and sudden freedom bade me, if I would continue his friend, forbear such language to him. I, all astonished and amazed, suppressed all my emotions till he should grow well, and his health were strong enough for me to deal with him as I would. But he was taken away from my madness, that with Thee he might be preserved for my comfort: a few days after, in my absence, he was attacked again by fever, and so departed."—iv. 8.

From distress of mind Augustine left his native place Thagaste, and came to Carthage, where he became a teacher in rhetoric. Here he fell in with Faustus, an eminent Manichæan bishop and disputant, in whom, however, he was disappointed; and the disappointment abated his attachment to his sect, and disposed him to look for truth elsewhere. Disgusted with the licence which prevailed among the students at Carthage, he determined to proceed to Rome, and disregarding and eluding the entreaties of his mother Monnica, who dreaded his removal from his own country, he went thither. At Rome he resumed his profession; but inconveniencies as great, though of another kind, encountered him in that city; and upon the people of Milan sending for a rhetoric reader, he made application for the appointment, and obtained it. To Milan then he came, the city of St. Ambrose, in the year of our Lord 385.

Ambrose, though weak in his voice, had the reputation of eloquence; and Augustine, who seems to have gone with introductions to him, and was won by his kindness of manner, attended his sermons with curiosity and interest. "I listened," he says, "not in the frame of mind which became me, but in order to see whether his eloquence answered what was reported of it: I hung on his words attentively, but of the matter I was but an unconcerned and contemptuous spectator."—v. 23. His impression of his style of preaching is worth noticing: "I was delighted with the sweetness of his discourse, more full of knowledge, yet in manner less pleasurable and soothing than that of Faustus." Augustine was

insensibly moved: he determined on leaving the Manichees, and returning to the state of a catechumen in the Catholic Church, into which he had been admitted by his parents. He began to eye and muse upon the great bishop of Milan more and more, and tried in vain to penetrate his secret heart, and to ascertain the thoughts and feelings which swayed him. He felt he did not understand him. If the respect and intimacy of the great could make a man happy, these advantages he perceived Ambrose to possess; yet he was not satisfied that he was a happy man. His celibacy seemed a drawback: what constituted his hidden life? or was he cold at heart? or was he of a famished and restless spirit? He felt his own malady, and longed to ask him some questions about it. But Ambrose could not easily be spoken with. Though accessible to all, yet that very circumstance made it difficult for an individual, especially one who was not of his flock, to get a private interview with him. When he was not taken up with the Christian people who surrounded him, he was either at his meals or engaged in private reading. Augustine used to enter, as all persons might, without being announced; but after staying awhile, afraid of interrupting him, he departed again. However, he heard his expositions of Scripture every Sunday, and gradually made progress.

He was now in his thirtieth year, and since he was a youth of eighteen had been searching after truth; yet he was still "in the same mire, greedy of things present," but finding nothing stable. "To-morrow," he said to himself, "I shall find it; it will appear manifestly, and I shall grasp it: lo,

Faustus the Manichæan will come and clear every thing! O you great men, ye academicians, is it true then, that no certainty can be attained for the ordering of life? Nay, let us search diligently, and despair not. Lo, things in the ecclesiastical books are not absurd to us now, which sometimes seemed absurd, and may be otherwise taken and in a good sense. I will take my stand where, as a child, my parents placed me, until the clear truth be found out. But where shall it be sought, or when? Ambrose has no leisure; we have no leisure to read; where shall we find even the books? where, or when, procure them? Let set times be appointed, and certain hours be ordered for the health of our soul. Great hope has dawned; the Catholic faith teaches not what we thought; and do we doubt to knock, that the rest may be opened? The forenoons, indeed, our scholars take up; what do we during the rest? why not this? But if so, when pay we court to our great friend, whose favours we need? when compose what we may sell to scholars? when refresh ourselves, unbending our minds from this intenseness of care?

"Perish every thing: dismiss we these empty vanities; and betake ourselves to the one search for truth! Life is a poor thing, death is certain; if it surprises us, in what state shall we depart hence? and when shall we learn what here we have neglected? and shall we not rather suffer the punishment of this negligence? What if death itself cut off and end all care and feeling? Then must this be ascertained. But God forbid this! It is no vain and empty thing, that the excellent dignity of the

Christian faith has overspread the whole world. Never would such and so great things be wrought for us by God, if with the body the soul also came to an end. Wherefore delay then to abandon worldly hopes, and give ourselves wholly to seek after God and the blessed life? But wait: even those things are pleasant; they have some and no small sweetness. We must not lightly abandon them, for it were a shame to return again to them. See, it is no great matter now to obtain some station, and then what should we wish for more? We have store of powerful friends; if nothing else offers, and we be in much haste, at least a presidency may be given us; and a wife with some fortune, that she increase not our charges; and this shall be the bound of desire. Many great men, and most worthy of imitation, have given themselves to the study of wisdom in the state of marriage."—vi. 18, 19.

In spite of this reluctance to give up a secular life, yet in proportion as the view of Christian truth opened on Augustine's mind, so was he drawn on to that higher state of Christian conversation on which our Lord and His Apostle have bestowed special praise. So it was, and not unnaturally in those times, that high and earnest minds, when they had found the truth, were not content to embrace it by halves; they would take all or none, they would go all lengths, they would covet the most excellent gifts, or they would remain as they were. It seemed to them absurd to take so much trouble to find the truth, and to submit to such a revolution in their opinions and motives as its reception involved; and yet, after all, to content themselves with a second-

best profession, unless there was a plain duty to oblige them to live the secular life they had hitherto led. The cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, the pomp of life, the pride of station, and the indulgence of sense, are tolerated by the Christian only when it would be a sin to renounce them. The pursuit of gain may be an act of submission to the will of parents; a married life is the fulfilment of a solemn and voluntary vow; but it may often happen, and did happen in Augustine's day especially, that there were no religious reasons against a man's giving up the world, as our Lord and his Apostles renounced it. When his parents were heathen, or were Christians of his own high temper, when he had no fixed engagement or position in life, when the State itself was either infidel or but partially emerging out of its old pollutions, and when grace was given to desire and strive after, if not fully to exercise the holiness of the Lamb's virginal company, duty would often lie, not in shunning, but in embracing an ascetic life. Besides, the Church in the fourth century had had no experience yet of temporal prosperity; she knew religion only amid the storms of persecution, or the uncertain lull between them, in the desert or the catacomb, in insult, contempt, and calumny. She had not yet seen, how opulence, and luxury, and splendour, and polite refinement, and fashion, were compatible with the Christian name; and her Saints imagined, with a simplicity or narrowness of mind which will in this day provoke a smile, that they must imitate Cyprian and Dionysius in their mode of living and their habits, as well as in their feelings, frames of mind, professions, and spiritual knowledge. Riches,

power, rank, and literary eminence, were then thought misfortunes; the atmosphere of the world was thought unhealthy: Augustine then, in proportion as he approached the Church, ascended towards heaven.

Time went on; he was in his thirty-second year; he still was gaining light; he renounced his belief in fatalism; he addressed himself to St. Paul's Epistles. He began to give up the desire of distinction in his profession: this was a great step; however, still his spirit mounted higher than his heart as yet could follow. "I was displeased," he says, "that I led a secular life; yea, now that my desires no longer inflamed me, as of old, with hopes of honour and profit, a very grievous burden it was to undergo so heavy a bondage. For in comparison of Thy sweetness, and 'the beauty of Thy honour, which I loved,' these things delighted me no longer. But still I was enthralled with the love of woman; nor did the Apostle forbid me to marry, although he advised me to something better, chiefly wishing that all men were as he himself. But I, being weak, chose the more indulgent place; and, because of this alone, was tossed up and down in all beside, faint and wasted with withering cares, because in other matters I was constrained, against my will, to conform myself to a married life, to which I was given up and enthralled. I had now found the goodly pearl, which, selling all that I had, I ought to have bought; and I hesitated."—viii. 2.

Finding Ambrose thus reserved, though kind and accessible, he went to an aged man named Simplician, who seems to have baptized St. Ambrose, and

eventually succeeded him in his see. He opened his mind to him, and happening in the course of his communications to mention Victorinus's translation of some Platonistic works, Simplician asked him if he knew that person's history. It seems he was a professor of rhetoric at Rome, was well versed in literature and philosophy, had been tutor of many of the senators, and had received the high honour of a statue in the Forum. Up to his old age he had professed, and defended with his eloquence, the old pagan worship. He was led to read the Holy Scriptures, and was brought, in consequence, to a belief in their divinity. For a while he did not feel the necessity of changing his profession; he looked upon Christianity as a philosophy, he embraced it as such, but did not propose to join what he considered the Christian sect, or, as Christians would call it, the Catholic Church. He let Simplician into his secret; but whenever the latter pressed him to conform, he was accustomed to ask, "whether walls made a Christian." However, such a state could not continue with a man of earnest mind: the leaven worked; at length he unexpectedly called upon Simplician to lead him to church. He was admitted a catechumen, and in due time baptized, "Rome wondering, the Church rejoicing." It was customary at Rome for the candidates for baptism to profess their faith from a raised place in the church, in a set form of words. An offer was made to Victorinus, which was not unusual in the case of bashful and timid persons, to make his profession in private. But he preferred to make it in the ordinary way. "I was public enough," he made answer, "in my profession

of rhetoric, and ought not to be frightened when professing salvation." He continued his school as before he became a Christian, till the edict of Julian forced him to close it. This story went to Augustine's heart, but it did not melt it. There was still the struggle of two wills, the high aspiration and the habitual inertness.

"I was weighed down with the encumbrance of this world pleasantly, as one is used to be with sleep; and my meditations upon Thee were like the efforts of men who would awake, yet are steeped again under the depth of their slumber. And as no one would wish always to be asleep, and in the sane judgment of all waking is better, yet a man commonly delays to shake off sleep, when a heavy torpor is on his limbs, and though it is time to rise, he enjoys it the more heartily while he ceases to approve it: so, in spite of my conviction that Thy love was to be obeyed rather than my own lusts, yet I yielded to the approval, but was taken prisoner by the enjoyment. When Thou saidst to me, 'Wake, thou that sleepest, and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light,' and showedst the plain reasonableness of Thy word, convinced by its truth, I could but give the slow and sleepy answer, 'Presently;' 'yes, presently,' 'wait awhile;' though that presently was never present, and that while became long. It was in vain that I delighted in Thy law in the inner man, while another law in my members fought against the law of my mind, and led me captive to the law of sin, which was in my members."—viii. 12.

One day, when he and his friend Alypius were

together at home, a countryman, named Pontitian, who held an office in the imperial court, called on him on some matter of business. As they sat talking, he observed a book upon the table, and on opening it found it was St. Paul's Epistles. A strict Christian himself, he was agreeably surprised to find an Apostle, where he expected to meet with some work bearing upon Augustine's profession. The discourse fell upon St. Antony, the celebrated Egyptian solitary, and while it added to Pontitian's surprise to find that they did not even know his name, they, on the other hand, were still more struck with wonder at the relation of his life, and the recent date of it. Thence the conversation passed to the subject of monasteries, the purity and sweetness of their discipline, and the treasures of grace which through them had been manifested in the desert. It turned out that Augustine and his friend did not even know of the monastery, of which Ambrose had been the patron, outside the walls of Milan. Pontitian went on to give an account of the conversion of two among his fellow-officers under the following circumstances. When he was at Treves, one afternoon, while the emperor was in the circus, he happened to stroll out, with three companions, into the gardens close upon the city wall. After a time they split into two parties, and while he and another went their own way, the other two came upon a cottage, which they were induced to enter. It was the abode of certain recluses, "poor in spirit," as Augustine says, "of whom is the kingdom of heaven;" and here they found the life of St. Antony, which Athanasius had written about twenty

years before (A.D. 364—366). One of them began to peruse it; and, moved by the narrative, they both of them resolved on adopting the monastic life.

The effect produced by this relation on Augustine was not less than was caused by the history of Antony itself upon the imperial officers, and almost as immediately productive of a religious issue. He felt that they did but represent to him, in their obedience, the very desideratum in his own, a remedy for his disordered and distressing state of mind. He says—

"The more ardently I loved these men, whose healthful state of soul was shown in surrendering themselves to Thee for healing, so much the more execrable and hateful did I seem to myself in comparison of them. For now many years had passed with me, as many perhaps as twelve, since my nineteenth, when, upon reading Cicero's 'Hortensius,' I was first incited to seek for wisdom; and still I was putting off renunciation of earthly happiness, and simple search after a treasure which, even in the search, not to speak of the discovery, was better than the actual possession of heathen wealth and power, and the pleasures of sense poured around me at my will. But I, wretched, wretched youth, in that spring-time of my life, had asked indeed of Thee the gift of chastity, but had said, 'Give me chastity and continence, but not at once.' I feared, alas, lest Thou shouldest hear me too soon, and cure a thirst at once, which I would fain have had satisfied, not extinguished . . But now . . disturbed in countenance as well as mind, I turn upon Alypius, 'What ails us?' say I, 'what is this? what is this story?

See; the unlearned rise and take heaven by violence, while we, with all our learning, all our want of heart, see where we wallow in flesh and blood! Shall I feel shame to follow their lead, and not rather to let alone what alone is left to me?' Something of this kind I said to him, and while he eyed me in silent wonder, rushed from him in the ferment of my feelings."—viii. 17—19.

He betook himself to the garden of the house where he lodged, Alypius following him, and sat for awhile in bitter meditation on the impotence and slavery of the human will. The thought of giving up his old habits of life once for all, pressed upon him with overpowering force, and, on the other hand, the beauty of religious obedience pierced and disordered him. He says—

"The very toys of toys, and vanities of vanities, my old mistresses, kept hold of me; they plucked my garment of flesh, and whispered softly, 'Are you indeed giving us up? What! from this moment are we to be strangers to you *for ever?* This and that, shall it be allowed you from this moment *never again?*' Yet, what a view began to open on the other side, whither I had set my face and was in a flutter to go; the chaste majesty of Continency, serene, cheerful yet without excess, winning me in a holy way to come without doubting, and ready to embrace me with religious hands full stored with honourable patterns! So many boys and young maidens, a multitude of youth and every age, grave widows and aged virgins, and Continence herself in all, not barren, but a fruitful mother of children, of joys by Thee, O Lord, her Husband. She seemed to

mock me into emulation, saying, 'Canst not thou what these have done, youths and maidens? Can they in their own strength or in the strength of their Lord God? The Lord their God gave me unto them. Why rely on thyself and fall? Cast thyself upon His arm. Be not afraid. He will not let you slip. Cast thyself in confidence, He will receive thee and heal thee.' Meanwhile Alypius kept close to my side, silently waiting for the end of my unwonted agitation."

He then proceeds to give an account of the termination of this struggle:—

"At length burst forth a mighty storm, bringing a mighty flood of tears; and to indulge it to the full, even unto cries, in solitude, I rose up from Alypius, . . . who perceived from my choked voice how it was with me. He remained where we had been sitting, in deep astonishment. I threw myself down under a fig-tree, I know not how, and allowing my tears full vent, offered up to Thee the acceptable sacrifice of my streaming eyes. And I cried out to this effect:—'And Thou, O Lord, how long, how long, Lord, wilt Thou be angry? For ever? Remember not our old sins:' for I felt that they were my tyrants. I cried out, piteously, 'How long? how long? to-morrow and to-morrow? why not *now?* why not in this very hour put an end to this my vileness?' While I thus spoke, with tears, in the bitter contrition of my heart, suddenly I heard a voice, as if from a house near me, of a boy or girl chanting forth again and again, 'TAKE UP AND READ, TAKE UP AND READ!' Changing countenance at these words, I began intently to think whether

boys used them in any game, but could not recollect that I had ever heard them. I left weeping and rose up, considering it a Divine intimation to open the Scriptures and read what first presented itself. I had heard that Antony had come in during the reading of the Gospel, and had taken to himself the admonition, 'Go, sell all that thou hast,' &c., and had turned to Thee at once, in consequence of that oracle. I had left St. Paul's volume where Alypius was sitting, when I rose thence. I returned thither, seized it, opened, and read in silence the following passage, which first met my eyes, '*Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envying, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.*' I had neither desire nor need to read farther. As I finished the sentence, as though the light of peace had been poured into my heart, all the shadows of doubt dispersed. Thus hast Thou converted me to Thee, so as no longer to seek either for wife or other hope of this world, standing fast in that rule of faith in which Thou so many years before revealedst me to my mother."—viii. 26—30.

The last words of this extract relate to a dream which his mother had had some years before, concerning his conversion. On his first turning Manichee, abhorring his opinions, she would not for a while even eat with him, when she had this dream, in which she had an intimation that where she stood, there Augustine should one day be with her. At another time she derived great comfort from the casual words of a bishop, who, when importuned by her to converse with her son, said at length with some impatience, "Go

thy ways, and God bless thee, for it is not possible that the son of these tears should perish!" It would be out of place, and is perhaps unnecessary, to enter here into the affecting and well known history of her tender anxieties and persevering prayers for Augustine. Suffice it to say, she saw the accomplishment of them; she lived till Augustine became a Catholic; and she died in her way back to Africa with him. Her last words were, "Lay this body anywhere; let not the care of it in any way distress you; this only I ask, that wherever you be, you remember me at the Altar of the Lord." "May she," says her son, in dutiful remembrance of her words, "rest in peace with her husband, before and after whom she never had any; whom she obeyed, with patience bringing forth fruit unto Thee, that she might win him also unto Thee. And inspire, O Lord my God, inspire Thy servants, my brethren,—Thy sons, my masters,—whom, in heart, voice, and writing I serve, that so many as read these confessions, may at thy altar remember Monnica, Thy handmaid, with Patricius, her sometime husband, from whom Thou broughtest me into this life; how, I know not. May they with pious affection remember those who were my parents in this transitory light,—my brethren under Thee, our Father, in our Catholic Mother,—my fellow-citizens in the eternal Jerusalem, after which Thy pilgrim people sigh from their going forth unto their return: that so, her last request of me may in the prayers of many receive a fulfilment, through my confessions, more abundant than through my prayers."—ix. 37.

But to return to St. Augustine himself. His conversion took place in the summer of 386 (as seems

most probable), and about three weeks after it, taking advantage of the vintage holidays, he gave up his school, assigning as a reason a pulmonary attack which had given him already much uneasiness. He retired to a friend's villa in the country for the rest of the year, with a view of preparing himself for baptism at the Easter following. His religious views were still very imperfect and vague. He had no settled notion concerning the nature of the soul, and was ignorant of the mission of the Holy Ghost. And still more, as might be expected, he needed correction and reformation in his conduct. During this time he broke himself of a habit of profane swearing, and, in various ways, disciplined himself for the sacred rite for which he was a candidate. It need scarcely be said that he was constant in devotional and penitential exercises.

In due time the sacrament of baptism was administered to him by St. Ambrose, who had been the principal instrument of his conversion; and he resolved on ridding himself of his worldly possessions, except what might be necessary for his bare subsistence, and retiring to Africa with the purpose of following the rule of life which it had cost him so severe a struggle to adopt. Thagaste, his native place, was his first abode, and he stationed himself in the suburbs, so as to be at once in retirement and in the way for usefulness, if any opening should arise in the city. His conversion had been followed by that of some of his friends, who, together with certain of his fellow-citizens, whom he succeeded in persuading, joined him, and who naturally looked up to him as the head of their religious community.

One of their fundamental regulations was the apostolic usage of casting their property into a common stock, whence distribution was made according to the need of each. Fasting and prayer, alms and Scripture-reading, were their stated occupations; and Augustine took upon himself the task of forming their minds upon those religious principles which they at present held chiefly upon his authority. This design he signified in answer to a friend who wished him to leave Thagaste and join him in a religious retirement elsewhere: "You," he said, "have obtained the gift of dwelling comfortably with your own mind, but my friends about me are but acquiring it, and cannot yet go alone." The consequence naturally was, that while he busied himself in forming others to devotional habits, his own leisure was taken from him. His fame spread, and serious engagements were pressed upon him of a nature little congenial with the life to which he had hoped to dedicate himself. Indeed, his talents were of too active and influential a character to allow of his secluding himself from the world, however he might wish it.

Thus he passed the first three years of his return to Africa, at the end of which time, A.D. 389, he was admitted into holy orders. The circumstances under which this change of state took place are curious, and, as in the instance of other Fathers, characteristic of the primitive times. His reputation having become considerable, he was afraid to approach any place where a bishop was wanted, lest he should be forcibly consecrated to the see. He seems to have set his heart on remaining for a time a layman,

from a feeling of the responsibility of the ministerial commission. He considered he had not yet mastered the nature and the duties of it. But it so happened, that at the time in question, an imperial agent or commissioner, living at Hippo, a Christian and a serious man, signified his desire to have some conversation with him, as to a design he had of quitting secular pursuits and devoting himself to a religious life. This brought Augustine to Hippo, whither he went with the less anxiety, because that city had at that time a bishop in the person of Valerius. However, it so happened that a presbyter was wanted there, though a bishop was not, and Augustine, little suspicious of what was to happen, joined the congregation in which the election was to take place. When Valerius addressed the people and demanded whom they desired for their pastor, they at once named the stranger, whose reputation had already spread among them. Augustine burst into tears, and some of the people, mistaking the cause of his agitation, observed to him, that though the presbyterate was lower than his desert, yet, notwithstanding, it stood next to the episcopate. His ordination followed, in performing which, Valerius, being a Greek, and unable to speak Latin fluently, was chiefly influenced by a wish to secure an able preacher in his own place. It may be remarked, as a singular custom in the African Church hitherto, that presbyters either never preached, or never in the presence of a bishop. Valerius was the first to break through the rule in favour of Augustine.

On his coming to Hippo, Valerius gave him a garden belonging to the Church to build a monastery

upon; and shortly afterwards we find him thanking Aurelius, bishop of Carthage, for bestowing an estate either on the brotherhood of Hippo or of Thagaste. Soon after we hear of monasteries at Carthage, and other places, besides two additional ones at Hippo. Others branched off from his own society, which he took care to make also a school of the Church. It became an object with the African Churches to obtain clergy from his monastery. Possidius, his pupil and friend, mentions as many as ten bishops out of his own acquaintance, who had been supplied from the school of Augustine.

Little more need be said to conclude this sketch of an eventful history. Many years had not passed, before Valerius, feeling the infirmities of age, appointed Augustine his coadjutor in the see of Hippo, and in this way secured his succeeding him on his death; an object which he had much at heart, but which he feared might be frustrated by Augustine's being called to the government of some other church. This elevation necessarily produced some change in the accidents of his life, but his personal habits remained the same. He left his monastery, as being too secluded to suit with an office which especially obliges its holder to the duties of hospitality; and he formed a religious, or rather a clerical society in the see-house. This society consisted chiefly of presbyters, deacons, and sub-deacons, who gave up all personal property, and were supported upon a common fund. He himself strictly conformed to the rule he imposed on others. Far from appropriating to any private purpose any portion of his ecclesiastical income, he placed the whole charge of it in the

hands of his clergy, who took by turns the yearly management of it, he being auditor of their accounts. He never indulged himself in house or land, considering the property of the see no more his own than his private possessions, which he had formerly given up. He employed it, in one way or other, directly or indirectly, as if the property of the poor, ignorant, and sinful. He had "counted the cost," and he acted like a man whose slowness to begin a course was a pledge of zeal when he had once begun it.

CHAPTER XIV.

DEMETRIAS.

"He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord; for not he that commendeth himself is approved, but whom the Lord commendeth."

Augustine was the founder of the monastic system in Africa; a system which, with all its possible perversions, (and none could be more sensible of these than he was,) has undoubtedly some especial place in the providential conduct of our dispensation. Even viewed as a mere human addition to the peculiarly apostolical institutions, Monachism has as fair a claim on us for a respectful treatment as the traditionary usages of the Rechabites had upon the Jews, which are implicitly countenanced in the reward divinely accorded to the filial piety which occasioned them. To say that it may be abused, is only what may be objected with equal force against many Protestant doctrines, such as justification by faith only, which are considered true and important nevertheless. But even if it be convicted of superstition, fanaticism, priestcraft, and the other charges brought against it by Protestants, still any how it must be acknowledged to be, not a simple self-originated error, but merely

a corruption of what is in itself good—the result of a misunderstanding of primitive faith and strictness; nothing more. A reader, indeed, may instantly ask what is the force of *merely* and *nothing more;* as if a corruption were not an evil great enough in itself. But let me ask him in turn, *could* our *present* system, in which we glory so much, by any possibility be corrupted into monasticism? is there any sort of tendency towards—rather, are not all our tendencies *from*—such a result? If so, it is plain the religious temper of these times is not like that of the primitive Church, the existing liability to certain degeneracies being a sort of index of certain tempers respectively. Clearly, then, whether or not Monachism is right, *we* at least are wrong, as differing in mind and spirit from the first ages of Christianity.

I would maintain, then, that the monastic life holds a real place in the dispensation of the Gospel, at least providentially.

One great purpose answered by it in the primitive ages was the maintenance of the truth, at times and places in which the Church had let it slip from her. Under such sad circumstances, the spouse of Christ "fled into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God." Thus in that noxious Arian "flood" which "the serpent cast out after the woman,"

> When withering blasts of error swept the sky,
> And Love's last flower seemed fain to droop and die,
> How sweet, how lone the ray benign
> On sheltered nooks of Palestine!
> Then to his early home did Love repair,
> And cheered his sickening heart with his own native air.

Augustine's monasteries indeed were not meant for this purpose. They were intended as the refuge of Christian piety and holiness, when the increasing spread of religion made the Church more secular. And we may confidently pronounce that such provisions, in one shape or other, will always be attempted by the more serious and anxious part of the community, whenever Christianity is generally professed. In Protestant countries, where monastic orders are unknown, men run into separatism with this object. Methodism has carried off into its own exceptionable discipline many a sincere and zealous Christian, whose heart needed what he found not in the Established Church. This defect in the appointments of the latter is the less excusable, because, I believe, there is no *præmunire* attached to the formation of such a subsidiary system as I am speaking of. That the formation of it requires the most wary judgment, special insight into human nature and Christian truth, and extensive knowledge of history, and, above all, a singular measure of the temper of obedience in those who are to be subjects of it, need scarcely be said; but there is no reason why the English Church should not, from among its members, supply these requisites.

Let it be considered, too, whether there is any other way of evangelizing large towns but that of posting bodies of a monastic character, for the purpose of preaching and visiting, among the dense and ignorant population.

There is another reason for such establishments, which applies particularly to women; religious sisterhoods are as much demanded in the model of a perfect Church by Christian charity, as religious frater-

nities can be by Christian zeal. I know not any more distressing development of the cruel spirit of Protestantism, than the determined, bitter, and scoffing spirit in which it has set itself against institutions which give dignity and independence to the position of women in society. As matters stand, marriage is almost the only shelter which a defenceless portion of the community has against the rude world;—a maiden life, that holy estate, is not only left in desolateness, but oppressed with heartless ridicule and insult;—whereas, foundations for single females, under proper precautions, at once hold out protection to those who avail themselves of them, and give consideration to the single state itself, thus saving numbers from the temptation of throwing themselves rashly away upon unworthy objects, transgressing their sense of propriety, and embittering their future life.

And if women have themselves lost so much by our present state of things, what has been the loss of the poor, sick, and aged, to whose service they might consecrate that life which they refuse to shackle by the marriage-vow? what has been the loss of the ignorant, sinful, and miserable, among whom they only can move without indignity who bear a religious character upon them; for whom they only can intercede or exert themselves, who have taken leave of earthly hopes and fears; who are secured by their holy resolve, from the admiring eye or the persuasive tongue, and can address themselves to the one heavenly duty to which they have set themselves with singleness of mind? Those who are un-married, and who know, and know that others know, that they

are likely one day to marry, who are exposed to the thousand subtle and fitful feelings of propriety, which, under such circumstances, are ever springing up in the modest breast, with a keen sensitiveness ever awake, and the chance of indefinible sympathies with others any moment arising, such persons surely may be beautiful in mind, and noble and admirable in conduct, but they cannot take on them the high office of Sisters of Mercy.

However, this chapter is to have nothing to do with monasteries or societies, if this is any relief to the reader, but to furnish a specimen of what to some persons may seem as bad, yet has been undeniably a practice of Christians, not from the fourth century, but from the time of St. Paul and St. Philip's daughters, the private and solitary observance of an ascetic life for religion's sake, and to the honour of Christ.

"There were always ascetics in the Church," says Bingham, "but not always monks retiring to the deserts and mountains, or living in monasteries and cells, as in after ages. Such were all those that inured themselves to greater degrees of abstinence and fasting than other men. In like manner, they who were more than ordinarily intent upon the exercise of prayer, and spent their time in devotion, were justly thought to deserve the name of ascetics. The exercise of charity and contempt of the world in any extraordinary degree, as when men gave up their whole estate to the service of God or use of the poor, was another thing that gave men the denomination and title of ascetics. The widows and virgins of the Church, and all such as confined themselves to a single life, were reckoned among the number of

ascetics, though there was then neither cloister nor vow to keep them under this obligation. Origen alludes to this name, when he says, the number of those who exercised themselves in perpetual virginity among the Christians, was great in comparison of those few who did it among the Gentiles. Lastly, all such as exercised themselves with uncommon hardships or austerities, for the greater promotion of piety and religion, as in frequent watchings, humicubations, and the like, had the name ascetics also."—*Antiqu.* vii. 1, § 1—3.

At present the only apparent remains among us, at least in the apprehension of the many, of these isolated persons, exist in what are commonly called old maids and single gentlemen; and it sometimes is seriously objected to the primitive doctrine of celibacy, that "bachelors are just the most selfish, unaccommodating, particular, and arbitrary persons in the community;" while "ancient spinsters are the more disagreeable, cross, gossiping, and miserable of their sex." Dreariness unmitigated, a shivering and hungry spirit, a soul preying on itself, a heart without an object, affections unemployed, life wasted, self-indulgence in prosperous circumstances, envy and malice in straitened; deadness of feeling in the male specimen, and impotence of feeling in the female; such are the only attributes with which the imagination of modern times can invest St. Ambrose, bishop and confessor, or St. Macrina, sister of the great Basil. Now it may seem an unaccountable waywardness in one brought up in the pure light of the nineteenth century, but I am going to say a few words about such an old maid, or holy virgin, as we

please to call her. In the year 413, the rich and noble Demetrias, a descendant of some of the most illustrious Roman houses, and moving in the highest circles, as we now speak, of the metropolis of the world, devoted herself at Carthage to a single life. It will be worth while to relate some particulars of her history.

She was the daughter of Anicius Hermogenianus Olybrius, who was consul A. D. 395, and Anicia Juliana, his relation. Her father, who died young, was son of the celebrated Sextus Petronius Probus, prefect of Italy from 368 to 375, who addressed St. Ambrose, while yet a catechumen, and appointed to a civil post in Liguria, in the celebrated and almost prophetic words, "Act not as magistrate, but as bishop." His riches were so abundant, that some Persian noblemen, who in the year 390 came to Milan to St. Ambrose, went, as the second object of curiosity, to Rome, to see the grandeur of Probus. His wife, that is, the paternal grandmother of Demetrias, Anicia Faltonia Proba, belonged, as her first name shows, to one of the most noble families in Rome. The consulate seemed hereditary in it; its riches and influence were unbounded; while its members appear to have been Christians from the time of Constantine, or, as some suppose, from the time of the persecutions. Of the same illustrious house was Juliana, the mother of Demetrias.

Rome was taken by Alaric in 410; and on this most awful visitation, among other heirs of grace, three females were found in the devoted city,—Faltonia Proba, Juliana, and Demetrias,—grandmother, mother, and daughter,—two widows and a girl. Fal-

tonia, and Juliana, her daughter-in-law, had, in the days of their prosperity, exerted themselves at Rome in favour of St. Chrysostom, then under persecution, and now, in their own troubles, they found a comforter and guide in St. Augustine. So closely was Christendom united then, that ladies in Rome ministered to one bishop at Constantinople, and took refuge with another in Africa. At first they seem all to have fallen into the hands of the barbarians, and many of the holy virgins of the city, who had sought protection with Proba, were torn from her house. At length, obtaining liberty to leave Rome, she embarked for Africa with her daughter-in-law and grand-daughter, and a number of widows and virgins who availed themselves of her departure to escape likewise. Our history shall be continued in the following letter, written by St. Augustine to this high-born and well-connected lady :—

"AUGUSTINE, BISHOP, SERVANT OF CHRIST AND OF CHRIST'S SERVANTS, TO THAT RELIGIOUS HANDMAID OF GOD, PROBA, HEALTH IN THE LORD OF LORDS.

"Bearing in mind your request and my promise, that I would write to you on the subject of prayer, when He to whom we pray had given me time and power, I ought, without delay, to discharge my engagement, and in the love of Christ consult your pious desire. How much that request of yours delighted me, as showing your high sense of a high duty, words cannot express. Indeed, how should you rather employ your widowhood than in continued prayer, night and day, according to the

admonition of the Apostle? For he says, 'Now she that is a widow indeed, and desolate, trusteth in God, and continueth in supplications and prayers night and day;' although it is at first sight strange, that one who is noble according to this world, like you, rich, and mother of such a family, and, therefore, though a widow, not desolate, should have her heart engaged and supremely possessed by the care to pray, save that you have the wisdom to perceive that in this world and in this life no soul can be beyond care.

"Therefore, He who has given you that thought, is in truth doing therein what He promised so wonderfully and pitifully to His disciples, when saddened, not for themselves, but for the race of man, and despairing that any could be saved, on his saying that it was easier for a camel to enter a needle's eye, than for a rich man the kingdom of heaven,—He answered, 'With God is easy what with man is impossible.' He, even while He was yet here in the flesh, sent the rich Zacchæus into the kingdom of heaven; and after He was glorified by His resurrection and ascension, imparting His Holy Spirit, He made many rich persons to contemn this world, and to increase in riches by losing the desire of them. For why should you, for instance, be thus anxious to pray to God, but that you trusted in Him? and why should you trust in Him, did you trust in uncertain riches, and despise that most wholesome precept of the Apostle, 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not highminded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, that they may lay hold of true life?'

"And so, for love for that true life, you ought to think yourself, even in this world, desolate, whatever be your outward prosperity. In this life's darkness, in which we are pilgrims from the Lord, and walk by faith, not by sight, the Christian soul ought to esteem itself desolate, lest it cease from prayer; and to learn to fix the eye of faith on the words of divine and holy Scriptures, as a lamp in a dark place, until the day dawn and the day-star arise in our hearts. This lamp is ineffably supplied from the Light which so shines in the darkness as not to be comprehended by it; by the sight of which the heart is cleansed through faith. For 'blessed are the clean in heart, for they shall see God.' And 'we know, that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.' Then will be true life after death, and true consolation after desolation. 'When Christ, who is your life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with Him in glory.' This is the true life, which the rich are bid lay hold of by good works; and this is true consolation, for which the widow now has desolation, and though she have sons and grandsons, and order her household piously, urging it on all of hers that they put their trust in God, yet she says in prayer, 'My soul thirsteth for Thee, my flesh also longeth after Thee, in a barren and dry land, where no water is;' that is, in this our dying life, by whatsoever mortal consolations it be thronged, by whatsoever travellers followed, or abundance stored. In truth, you understand how uncertain all these things are; nay, were they not uncertain, what are they in comparison of that promised felicity?

"To obtain this blessed life, we are taught by the true blessed Life Himself to pray, not in much speaking, as though the more wordy we were, the surer we were heard; since we pray to Him, who, as the Lord Himself says, knows our necessities before we ask of Him. But if so, it may seem strange, why, though He has forbidden much speaking, yet, while knowing our necessities before we ask of Him, He has encouraged us to pray, in the words, 'One ought always to pray, and not to faint.' It may surprise us, until we understand, that our Lord and God does not wish our will to be made clear to Him, which He cannot but know, but that, our desire being exercised in prayers, we may be able to receive what He prepares to give. In faith indeed, and hope, and charity, we are always praying, with uninterrupted desire; but we ask God in words, also, at certain intervals of hours and times, that by those outward signs we may admonish ourselves, and may see into ourselves, what progress we have made in this desire, and may stimulate ourselves the more to heighten it. We recal our minds at certain hours to the business of prayer, from those other cares and businesses, by which that desire itself is, in a measure, chilled; admonishing ourselves, by the words of prayer, to reach forward to that which we desire, lest what is already chilling may altogether cool, and may be altogether quenched, unless now and then rekindled.

"This being the case, even prolonged prayer, when one has time for it,—that is, when other good and necessary actions are not superseded, though even in the midst of them, we ought in desire ever to be praying,—such long prayer is neither wrong nor use-

less. Nor is this continued prayer, as some think, much speaking: many words is one thing, a continued affection another. For it is written of the Lord Himself, that He 'passed the night in prayer,' and that He prayed 'more largely;' in which what did He but set us an example?—in this world making supplications in season, with the Father hearing them for evermore.

"The brethren in Egypt are said to make frequent prayers, but those as short as possible, and somehow darted forward rapidly, lest lively attention, which is so necessary in praying, should become faint and dull by a slow performance; and thus they themselves show plainly, that this attention, as it should not be wearied out if it cannot be sustained, so it is not prematurely to be broken if it can. To speak much, is to urge our necessities in prayer with superfluous words; but to pray much, is to knock for Him to whom we pray, with prolonged and pious exercise of the heart. This is often done more by groans than speeches, by weeping than by addresses. For He sets our tears in His sight, and our groaning is not hid from Him, who, having made all things by His Word, does not ask for words of man.

"Pray, then, as a widow of Christ, who have not yet the sight of Him whose aid you entreat. And though you be most opulent, pray as one of the poor; for you have not yet the true riches of the world to come, where there is no dread of loss. Though you have children and grandchildren, and a numerous household, yet pray as one desolate; for all temporal things are uncertain, though they are to remain even to the end of this life for our consola-

tion. And surely, remember to pray with earnestness for me. For I am unwilling that you should render to me my dangerous honour, yet should withhold that my necessary support. Christ's household prayed for Peter and for Paul; and while it is my joy that you are of his household, it is my need incomparably more than Peter or Paul, that brotherly prayers should be my succour. Strive ye in prayer, in a peaceable and holy strife; not striving against each other, but against the devil, the enemy of all saints. In fastings, and watchings, and all chastisement of the body, prayer is especially aided. Let each of you do what she can; what one cannot, she does in her who can; if in her she loves that, which she therefore does not do herself because she cannot. Accordingly, she who has less strength, must not hinder her who has more, and she who has more, must not be hard with her who has less. For your conscience is owed to God; to none of yourselves owe any thing, but to love one another. May God hear you, who is able to do above what we ask or understand."—*Ep.* 130.

These are some portions of St. Augustine's letter to Proba, in which his remarks upon set times of prayer must not be understood, contrary to the very drift of his whole advice, as confining their use to what is called their "moral effect" upon the mind; but to mean that, whereas God hears those who are intent on the words they use, not those who are not, we are likely to pray more acceptably, because more attentively, in prayer at set times, than in habitual mental prayer, and in short pointed prayers, than in long addresses.

The exiled ladies seem to have lived in Carthage, and we hear nothing of them for several years. At the end of this time, a remarkable event happened; Demetrias, who now had arrived at woman's estate, declared her resolve of devoting herself to a single life; as it would seem, at her own instance, though Augustine and Alypius, by this time bishop of Thagaste, were unconscious instruments in her determination. Her mother and grandmother appear to have been backward in the matter, or rather to have destined her, as a matter of course, to a married life, and to have provided her with a husband. Fame was not slow in spreading the news of her singular resolve far and wide. The rank and prospects of the party making it, and the intercommunion of the Catholic Church, afforded reason and means for its dissemination. It reached the East, where Proba had possessions, and it penetrated into the monastery at Bethlehem, which was the home of St. Jerome. This celebrated Father was then in his eighty-third year; but "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated." Old age neither hindered nor disinclined him from taking an interest in the general concerns of the Church. At the instance of Proba and Juliana, he addressed to Demetrias a letter, or rather tract, in order to encourage her in her determination; and as it happens to relate some of the circumstances under which that determination was made, it may suitably here be introduced to the reader's notice.

Before beginning them, a word or two about St. Jerome. I do not scruple then to say, that were he not a saint, there are things in his writings and views from which I should shrink; but as the case

stands, I shrink rather from putting myself in opposition to something like a judgment of the Catholic world in favour of his saintly perfection. I cannot, indeed, force myself to approve or like against my judgment or feeling; but I can receive things on faith against both the one and the other. And I am willing to take certain characteristics of this learned and highly-gifted man on faith; and there is, perhaps, need of some exercise of this kind, even in the striking letter from which extracts are now to be made.

"It is the rule of rhetoricians," says he, "to adduce grandfathers, and forefathers, and every past distinction of the line, for the glory of him who is the subject of praise; that fertile root may make up for barren branches, and what is wanting in the fruit may show to advantage in the stem. I ought to recount the famous names of the Probi or Olybrii, and the illustrious line of Anician blood, in which none, or next to none, has failed of the consulate; or I ought to bring forward Olybrius, our virgin's father, who, to the grief of all Rome, was unmaturely carried off. I dare not say more, lest I deal ungently with the holy matron's wound, and the recounting of his virtues be a renewing of her grief. A pious son, a dear husband, a kind lord, a courteous citizen, a consul when a boy, but a senator more illustrious in the amiableness of his life. Happy in his death, who saw not his country's ruin; still happier in his offspring, who has added to the nobility of his ancestress Demetrias, by the perpetual chastity of Demetrias his daughter.

"But what am I about? In forgetfulness of my purpose, while I advise this young maiden, I have

been praising the world's goods, whereas, rather it is the very praise of our virgin, that she has despised them all, regarding herself not as noble, not as surpassing rich, but as a child of man. An incredible fortitude, amid jewels and silk, troops of slaves and waiting women, the obsequiousness and attentions of a thronging household, and the refined dainties of a lordly establishment, to have longed for painful fastings, coarse garments, spare diet! In truth, she had read the Lord's words, 'They who are clothed in soft raiment are in kings' houses.' She gazed in wonder at the life of Elias and John Baptist, both of them with their loins girt and mortified with a leathern belt; and one of them appearing in the spirit and power of Elias, the Lord's forerunner prophesying in his parent's womb, and even before the day of judgment praised by the Judge's voice. She admired the ardour of Anna, daughter of Phanuel, who, up to the extreme of age, served the Lord in His temple with prayer and fastings. She longed for the choir of Philip's four virgin daughters, and wished herself one of these, who, by virginal chastity, had gained the gift of prophecy. By these and like meditations, she nourished her mind, fearing nothing more than to grieve grandmother and mother, whose pattern encouraged her, whose intention frightened her,—not that the holy resolve displeased them, but, for the greatness of the thing, they durst not wish it. A trouble came upon that recruit of Christ, and like Esther, a hatred of her apparel. They say who saw her and know, holy and noble ladies, whom the fierce tempest of enemies drave from the Gallic coast to inhabit these holy places, by way of Africa, that

at nights, when no one knew except the virgins in her mother's and grandmother's company, she was never clad in linen, never reposed on soft down ; but on the bare earth, with her tiny hair-cloth for bedding, and her face bedewed with continual tears, there was she, prostrate in heart at her Saviour's knees, that He would accept her resolve, fulfil her longing, and soften grandmother and mother.

"Why so many words? When now the day of her marriage was at hand, and the wedding apartment was preparing, secretly, and without witnesses, and with the night for her comforter, it is said she armed herself by counsels such as these: 'What doest thou, Demetrias? why such fright in defending thy honour? thou must be free and bold. If such thy fear in peace, what had been thy deed in martyrdom? If thou canst not brook the look of relatives, how couldest thou brook the tribunal of persecutors? If man's pattern does not stir thee, let Agnes, blessed martyr, encourage and quiet thee, who overcame her age and her tyrant, and consecrated by martyrdom her profession of chastity. Thou knowest not, poor maid, thou knowest not, it seems, to whom thou owest thy virginity. It is a while since thou didst tremble amid barbarian hands, and didst hide thyself in the bosom and the dress of grandmother and mother. Thou didst see thyself a captive, and thy honour not thine own. Thou didst shudder at the savage faces of the foe; didst see with silent groan God's virgins carried off. Thy city, once the head of the world, is the Roman people's grave ; and wilt thou on the Libyan shore, an exile, accept an exile spouse? Who shall be thy bridemaid? What train

shall conduct thee? Shall the harsh Punic sing thy liberal Fescennine? Away with all delay. God's "perfect love casteth out fear." Take the shield of faith, the breast-plate of righteousness, the helmet of salvation: go out to battle. Honour rescued has its own martyrdom. Why apprehensive of thy grandmother? why in fear of thy parent? Perhaps they have a will, because they deem that you have none.' On fire with these incentives, and many more, she cast from her the ornaments of her person and secular dress, as if encumbrances to her resolve. Costly necklaces, expensive pearls, brilliant jewels, she replaces in their cabinet; she puts on a common tunic, and over it a more common cloak; and, without notice, suddenly throws herself at her grandmother's knees, showing who she was, only by weeping and lamentation. Aghast was that holy and venerable lady, seeing the altered dress of her grandchild; while her mother stood astounded with delight. What they wished, they could not believe. Their voice was gone; their cheek flushed and paled, they feared, they rejoiced; their thronging thoughts went to and fro. Grandchild and grandmother, daughter and mother, rush tumultuously upon each other's lips. They weep abundantly for joy, they raise the sinking maid with their hands, they clasp her trembling form. They acknowledge in her resolve their own mind, and they express their joy that the virgin was making a noble family more noble by her virginity. She had found a deed she might offer to her race,—a deed to slake the ashes of the Roman city. Gracious Jesus! what exultation then in the whole house. As if from a fruitful root,

many virgins budded out at once, and a crowd of dependents and handmaidens followed the example of their patroness and mistress. The profession of virginity became rife in every house; their rank in the flesh various, their reward of chastity the same. I say too little. All the Churches through Africa almost danced for joy. Not cities alone, towns, villages, even cottages, were pervaded by the manifold fame of it. All the islands between Africa and Italy were filled with this news; it tripped not in its course, and the rejoicing ran forward. Then Italy put off her mourning garb, and the shattered walls of Rome in part recovered their pristine splendour, thinking that God was propitious to themselves in the perfect conversion of their nursling. The report penetrated to the shores of the East, and even in the inland cities the triumph of Christian glory was heard. Who of Christ's virgins but boasted in her fellowship with Demetrias? what mother but cried blessing upon thy womb, O Juliana? I never praised in Proba the antiquity of her race, the greatness of her wealth and influence, either as a wife or a widow, as others, perhaps, in a mercenary strain. My object is, in ecclesiastical style, to praise the grandmother of my virgin, and to render thanks that she has strengthened her grandchild's will by her own. Else my monastic cell, common food, mean dress, and age upon the eve of death, and store for a brief span, rid me of all reproach of flattery. And now, what remains of my treatise shall be directed to the virgin herself; a noble virgin: noble not less by sanctity than by birth, who is in the more danger of a lapse, the higher she has ascended.

"One thing especially, child of God, will I admonish you, to possess your mind with a love of sacred reading. When you were in the world, you loved the things of the world; to rouge and whiten your complexion, to deck your hair, and rear a tower of borrowed locks. Now, since you have left the world, and by a second step after baptism have made engagement with your adversary, saying to him, 'I renounce thee, devil, with thy words, thy pomp, and thy works:' keep the covenant thou hast pledged. I speak this, not from any misgiving about you, but according to the duty of a fearful and cautious monitor, dreading in you even what is so safe.

"The arms of fasting are also to be taken up, and David's words to be sung, 'I humbled my soul in fasting;' and 'I ate ashes as it were bread;' and 'When they were sick I put on sackcloth.' For a meal, Eve was cast out of Paradise; Elias, exercised by a fast of forty days, is carried off to heaven in a chariot of fire. Moses is fed forty days and nights by intercourse and converse with God; proving, in his own instance, the exact truth of the saying, 'Man shall not live by bread only, but by every word which proceedeth from the mouth of God.' The Saviour of man, who left us the pattern of His perfection and life, after baptism, is forthwith taken in the Spirit to fight against the devil, and after beating down and crushing him, to give him over to His own disciples to trample on. Against the young of either sex our enemy uses the ardour of their time of life, and 'setteth on fire the course of nature,' and fulfils Osee's saying, 'They are all adulterers, they have made ready their heart like an oven,' which is

cooled again by God's pity and the rigour of fastings. These are the fiery darts of the devil, which both wound and inflame, and are prepared by the king of Babylon for the three children. And as then a Fourth, having the form as of the Son of man, mitigated the infinite heat, and amid the conflagration of a raging furnace, taught the flame to lose its virtue, and to threaten to the eye what to the touch it did not fulfil; so, also, in a virginal mind, by celestial dew and strict fasts, the warmth of youth is quenched, and the life of Angels is compassed in a human frame.

"Nor yet do we enjoin on you unmeasured fastings, or an extravagant abstinence from food, which at once breaks delicate frames, and makes them sickly, ere the foundation of holy conversation is yet laid. Even philosophers have held that 'virtues are a mean, vices extremes;' and hence one of the seven sages says, 'Nothing too much.' You should fast short of panting and failing in breath, and of being carried or led by your companions; but so far as to subdue your appetite, yet to be able to attend to sacred reading, Psalms, and watching as usual. Fasting is not an absolute virtue, but the foundation of other virtues; and 'sanctification and honour,' 'without which no one shall see the Lord,' is a step for such as are mounting to the highest, nor will it crown the virgin, if it be alone.

"Imitate your heavenly Spouse; 'be subject' to your grandmother and mother. See no man, youths especially, except with them. It is their pattern, it is the holy conduct of their house, which has taught you to seek virginity, to know Christ's precepts, to

know what is expedient for you, what you ought to choose. Therefore, do not think that what you are belongs to yourself alone; it is theirs who have brought out in you their own virtue, and budded forth in you, as the most costly flower of 'honourable marriage and the bed undefiled;' a flower which will not bear its perfect fruit till you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, and ever remember what is written, 'God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.' Now where grace is in question, there is not recompensing of works, but bounty of a giver, according to the Apostle's saying, 'Not of him that willeth, nor of him that runneth, but of God that showeth mercy.' And yet to will and not to will is ours; yet not ours, what is even ours, without God's showing mercy.

"I end as I began, not content with one admonition. Love Holy Scriptures, and wisdom will love thee; love her, and she will keep thee; honour her, and she will embrace thee. Let these be the ornaments abiding on thy neck and in thine ears. Let thy tongue know nought but Christ; let it have power to utter nought but what is holy. Let the sweetness of thy grandmother and mother ever be in thy mouth, whose following is the very form of holiness."—*Ep.* 130.

Sage and sobering as is the advice here given, (and I wish I had room to extract more of it,) yet, I suppose, under the circumstances, a calm looker-on might have thought it not uncalled for,—might have apprehended, as perhaps St. Jerome did himself, that when a young lady was brought out as a pattern to the whole Catholic world, written to and

about by bishops and doctors of the Church, by grave and aged men, the most remarkable personages of their time, under such circumstances, without some special and almost miraculous gift of grace, the said maiden's head stood in danger of being turned by the compliment. And holy and admirable as Demetrias was, she was, in fact, for awhile in hazard, and that from the influence of the particular heresy of the day, which was a temptation especially adapted to her case. When sinners repent and turn to God, and, by way of showing sorrow and amendment, subject themselves to voluntary mortifications, the memory of what they were, and the prospect of judgment to come, are likely, it is to be hoped, to keep them from spiritual pride. But when a young and innocent female, whose baptismal robe the world has not sullied, takes up a self-denying life in order to be nearer to God, and to please Him more entirely, who does not see the danger she is in of self-importance, or what is in this day called self-righteousness,—the danger of forgetting that she is by nature a sinner, as others, and that whatever she has of excellence, and whatever she does praiseworthy, is entirely of God's supernatural grace? And to a person so disposed, Pelagius was at that day at hand a ready tempter, prepared to sanctify all these evil feelings, and to seal and fix them as if on the basis of religious principle. The heresiarch was on the earth in person, when Demetrias renounced the world, and he did not neglect the occasion. By this time the noble exiles had apparently returned to Rome; and Pelagius despatched a letter, or rather treatise, still extant, with a view of instructing and guiding

the daughter of the Olybrii and Anicii. He professes to write it at the instance of Juliana; nor is it surprising that the latter should not have been able to detect the doctrinal errors of a man of unblemished life, who, three years after, contrived to mislead the Apostolic see into a defence of him against the Africans,—the very see which St. Jerome, in a part of the foregoing letter not translated, recommends to Demetrias as a safe guide of her faith.

It is not to my purpose here to make extracts from Pelagius's treatise, which is full of good advice, and does no more than imply, though it does imply, his uncatholic and unscriptural views about the power and perfectibility of unaided human nature. These views one would almost suspect that Jerome was indirectly opposing in some portions of the foregoing letter, as if the aged saint, now near his end, had a forecast of the temptation which was coming on mother and daughter. But however this may be, we have, in the year 417, a direct remonstrance, addressed by Augustine and Alypius to Juliana, on the subject of Pelagius's treatise, of which, however, they did not know for certain the author at the time. Proba, at this date, seems to have been dead.

"It was a great satisfaction to us, lady, honoured for services of Christian duty, and our deservedly illustrious daughter, that your letter happened to find us together at Hippo, and able to convey to you our joint gratulations at the news of your welfare, and lovingly assure you of ours, which we trust is dear to you. For we are sure you understand the debt of religious affection we owe you, and the care we have for you in the sight of God and man. So

highly, indeed, has our ministry been blessed in your house, by our Saviour's grace and pity, that when a human marriage had already been arranged, the holy Demetrias preferred the spiritual embrace of that Spouse who is fairer than the children of men, and who is wedded in order that the spirit may be more fruitful while the flesh remains inviolate. Yet this influence of our exhortations on that believing and noble virgin had been unknown to us, had not your own letters most happily and authentically informed us, after our departure, when in a little while she had made profession of virginal chastity, that this great gift of God, which He plants and waters by His servants, Himself giving the increase, had been the produce of our husbandry.

"No one, under these circumstances, can call it intrusion, if, with a most affectionate interest, we are solicitous in warning you against doctrines contrary to the grace of God. For though the Apostle bids us be instant in preaching the word, not in season only, but out of season, we do not reckon you among such as would deem our word or writing out of season, when we speak to warn you seriously against unsound doctrine. Accordingly, you accepted with gratitude our former admonition in the letter to which we now reply, saying, 'I am full of thanks for your reverences' pious advice, bidding me deny my ears to these men, who often corrupt our venerable faith with their erroneous writing.'

"Your following words, in which you say that 'you and your small household are far removed from such men; and that your whole family so strictly follows the Catholic faith as never to have deviated,

never been betrayed into any heresy, not only fatal, but even small,' give us still greater ground for speaking to you concerning those who are trying to corrupt what hitherto has been sound. How can we forbear to warn those we are so bound to love, after reading a treatise which some one has written to the holy Demetrias, or which came to yourself, (you shall inform us on this point in your reply,) from which that virgin of Christ may learn, if so be, that her virginal sanctity and all her spiritual riches are her own work; and, as a perfection of her blessedness may be taught (if we may say the words) to be ungrateful to her God? So it is; these are the words, 'You are possessed of that for which you are deservedly preferred to others; nay, the more, in that your personal nobility and opulence belong to your friends, not to you; but spiritual riches none but yourself can provide for you. In that is your right praise, your deserved preference, which cannot be except *of thee* and in thee.' Forbid it, that a virgin of Christ should take pleasure in such words, who has a religious understanding of the innate poverty of the human heart, and therefore wears no ornaments there but the gifts of her Bridegroom! Who was it that separated you from the mass of death and perdition which is in Adam? He surely, who came to seek and to save that which was lost. When, then, a man hears the Apostle ask, 'Who made thee to differ?' shall he answer, 'my religious will, my faith, my righteousness?' and not rather go on to hear what follows, 'What hast thou which thou hast not received?'

"We have that opinion of the Christian conduct and humility in which this pious maiden has been

trained, as to feel assured, that on reading the words in question, if she read them, she sighed deeply, and humbly struck her breast, perhaps wept, and earnestly prayed the Lord, to whom she is dedicated, and by whom she is sanctified, that as the words were not her's, but another's, so her faith may not be of such a temper as to admit of the thought that she has what may give her title to glory in herself, not in the Lord. For her glory is indeed *in* herself, not in the words of others, according to the Apostle's saying, 'Let every one prove his own work, and then he shall have glory in himself, and not in another.' But forbid it that *she* should be her own glory, and not He, to whom it is said, 'My glory, and the lifter up of my head.' For then is her glory religiously in her, when God, who is in her, is Himself her glory; from whom she has all the goods which make her good, and will have all which will make her better, as far as in this life she can be better; and which will make her perfect, when she is perfected by Divine grace, not by human praise.

"However, we had rather have your assurance in writing, that we are not deceived in this view of her feelings. We know full well that you and all yours are, and ever have been, worshippers of the undivided Trinity. But there are fatal heresies on other points of doctrine. Such is that which has been the subject of this letter, on which, perhaps, we have said more than is sufficient to a judgment so faithful and conscientious as yours is."—*Ep.* 188.

That this letter produced the result intended, cannot be doubted. What became of Juliana after this does not appear, though it is supposed she died at

Rome. As to Demetrias, it is interesting to find extant a treatise of a later date addressed to her on the subject of humility. It has been ascribed by some to St. Prosper, by others to St. Leo, and introduces the subject of Pelagianism. A sentence or two will show us the style of the work. "Enter," says the author, "into the chamber of thy mind, and in the secret place of that thy most pure conscience, look round on what ornaments are there stored up for thee; and, whatever splendid, whatever beautiful and costly, you shall there find, doubt not it is of Divine workmanship and gift, so that in all the goods of thy opulence acknowledge both the grace of the Giver, and His right of ownership. For thou hast received what thou hast, and whatever has accrued to thee by the diligence of thy efforts, through Him has it been increased by whom it was begun. Therefore, thou must use what God has bestowed; and must even beg of Him to use His gifts faithfully and wisely."—c. 22. It may be observed that this author, whoever he is, seems not to have seen St. Austin's letter to Juliana on the same subject. It is pleasant to find that, while the ancient bishops and teachers exhorted the rich to renunciation of the world, they did not flatter them on their complying, but kept a vigilant eye on them, from youth to age, lest they should find a temptation where they looked for a blessing.

This work was written about A. D. 430; the last notice which history has preserved to us of this holy and interesting lady is after the sack of Rome by Genseric, when she might be about sixty years of age. She ends as she began. The sacred edifices had suffered in various ways from the fury and cupidity of

the barbarians; St. Leo, who had dissuaded Genseric from burning the city, after his retiring, exerted his influence in various directions to add to the number of churches. Under his advice, Demetrias built the Basilica of St. Stephen, on property of her own, situated on the Latin road, three miles from Rome. With mention of this good deed, of which there is yearly memory in the Roman breviary on the 11th of April, the festival of St. Leo, we may suitably take our leave of one who preferred to give her wealth to the Church, to spending it in the aggrandizement of some patrician house.

CHAPTER XV.

JOVINIAN AND HIS COMPANIONS.

"And he said unto him, I am a prophet also as thou art, and an angel spoke unto me by the Word of the Lord, saying, Bring him back with thee into thine house, that he may eat bread and drink water. But he lied unto him."

We sometimes hear it said that, true though it be, that the Catholic system, as we Anglicans maintain it, existed in the fourth century, yet that nevertheless it was a system foreign to the pure Gospel, though introduced at a very early age; a system of Pagan or Jewish origin, which crept in unawares, and was established on the ruins of the Apostolic faith by the episcopal confederation, which mainly depended on it for its own maintenance. In other words, it is considered by some persons to be a system of priest-craft, destructive of Christian liberty.

Now, it is no paradox to say, that this would be a sufficient answer to such a speculation, were there no other, viz. that no answer *can* be made to it. I say, supposing it could not be answered at all, that fact would be an answer. All discussion must have data to go upon; without data, neither one party can dispute, nor the other. If I maintained there were negroes in the moon, I should like to know how these same philosophers would answer me. Of course they would not attempt it: they would con-

fess they had no grounds for denying it, only they would add, that I had no grounds for asserting it. They would not prove that I was wrong, but call upon me to prove that I was right. They would consider such a mode of talking idle and childish, and unworthy the consideration of a serious man; else there would be no end of speculation, no hope of certainty and unanimity in anything. Is a man to be allowed to say what he will, and bring no reasons for it? Even if his hypothesis fitted into the facts of the case, still it would be but an hypothesis, and might be met perhaps, in the course of time, by another hypothesis, presenting as satisfactory a solution of them. But if it would not be necessarily true, though it were adequate, much less is it entitled to consideration, before it is proved to be adequate, — before it is actually reconciled with the facts of the case; and when another hypothesis has, from the beginning, been in the possession of the field. From the first it has been believed, that the Catholic system is Apostolic; convincing reasons must be brought against this belief, and in favour of another, before that other is to be preferred to it.

Now the new and gratuitous hypothesis in question does not appear, when examined, even to harmonize with the facts of the case. I will give two instances of this. First, if the Church system be not Apostolic, it must, some time or other, have been introduced; and then comes the question, *when?* We maintain, that the known circumstances of the previous history are such as to preclude the possibility of any time being assigned, ever so close upon the Apostles, at which it did not exist. Not only

cannot a time be shown when the free-and-easy system now in fashion *did* generally exist, but no time can be shown in which it can be colourably maintained that the Church system did not exist. It will be said, of course, that the Church system was *gradually* introduced. I do not say there have never been introductions of any kind; but let us see what they amount to here. Select for yourself your *doctrine*, or your *ordinance*, which you say was introduced, and try to give the history of its introduction. Hypothetical that history will be, of course; but we will not scruple at that;—we will only ask one thing, that it should cut clean *between* the real facts of the case, though it bring none in its favour; but it will not be able to do even this. The rise of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, of the usage of baptizing infants, of the eucharistic offering, of the episcopal prerogatives, do what one will, cannot be made short of Apostolical times. This is not the place to prove all this; but so fully is it felt to be so, by those who are determined not to admit these portions of Catholicism, that in their despair of drawing the line between the first and following centuries, they make up their minds to intrude into the first, and boldly pursue their supposed error into the very presence of some Apostle or Evangelist. Thus St. John is sometimes made the voluntary or involuntary originator of some portions of our creed. Dr. Priestley, I believe, conjectures that his amanuensis played him false, as regards the sacred doctrine which that philosopher opposed. Others denounce St. Barnabas the Apostle as a puerile and nonsensical writer, on the ground of the epistle, which many

think is not his, but which these persons are eager in ascribing to him. Others have gone a step further, and have said, "Not Paul, but Jesus." Infidel, Socinian, and Protestant, agree in assailing the Apostles, rather than submitting to the Church.

This, then, is one obstacle in the way of the opponents of the Catholic system; they cannot disconnect it from Apostolic times. Another, which leads to the subject of this paper, is as follows:—That, let them go to what quarter of Christendom they will, let them hunt among heretics, or schismatics, into Gnosticism outside the Church, or Arianism within it, still they will find no hint or vestige anywhere of that system which they are now pleased to call scriptural. Granting that Catholicism be a corruption, is it possible that it should be a corruption springing up everywhere at once? Is it conceivable, that at least no opponent should have retained any remnant of the system it supplanted?—that no tradition of primitive purity should remain in any part of Christendom?—that no protest, or controversy, should have been raised, as a monument against the victorious error? This argument, conclusive against modern Socinianism, is still more cogent and striking, when directed against Puritanism. At least, there *were* divines in those early days who denied the sacred doctrine which Socinianism also disowns, though commonly they did not profess to do so on authority of tradition; but who ever heard of Erastians, Supralapsarians, Independents, Sacramentarians, and the like, before the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries? It would be too bold to go to prove a negative: I can only say, that I do not know in what quarter to

search for the representatives, in the early Church, of that peculiarity, or *peculiarism* in religion, (if I may give it a significant appellation,) which is now so much in favour. At first sight one is tempted to say that all errors come over and over again; that this and that notion, now in vogue, has been refuted in times past. This is indeed a general truth—nay, for what I know, these same bold speculatists will bring it as an argument for their not being in error, that antiquity says nothing at all, good or bad, about their opinions. I cannot answer for the extent to which they will throw the *onus probandi* on us; but I protest—be it for us, or be it against us—I cannot find this very peculiarism of theirs in ancient times, whether in friend or foe, Jew or Pagan, Montanist or Novatian; though I find surely enough, and in plenty, the *general* characteristics, which are conspicuous in their philosophy, of self-will, eccentricity, and love of paradox.

So far from it, that if we wish to find the rudiments of the Catholic system clearly laid down in writing, those who are accounted least orthodox will prove as liberal in their information about it as the strictest Churchman. We can endure even the *heretics* better than our opponents can endure the *Apostles*. Tertullian, though a Montanist, gives no sort of encouragement to the so-called Bible Christian of this day; rather he would be the object of their decided abhorrence and disgust. Origen is not a whit more of a Protestant, though he, if any, ought, from the circumstances of his history, to be a witness against us. It is averred that the alleged revolution of doctrine and ritual was introduced by the influence

of the episcopal system; well, here is a victim of episcopacy, brought forward by our opponents as such. Here is a man who was persecuted by his bishop, and driven out of his country; and whose name after his death has been dishonourably mentioned, both by councils and fathers. He surely was not in the episcopal conspiracy, at least; and perchance may give the latitudinarian, the anabaptist, the Erastian, and the utilitarian, some countenance. Far from it; he is as high, and as keen, as removed from softness and mawkishness, as ascetic and as reverential, as any bishop among them. He is as superstitious, (as men now talk,) as fanatical, as formal, as Athanasius or Augustine. Certainly, there seems something providential in the place which Origen holds in the early Church, considering the direction which theories about it are now taking; and much might be said on that subject.

Take another instance:—there was, in the fourth century, a party of divines who were politically opposed to the line of ecclesiastics, whose principles had been, and were afterwards, dominant in the Church, such as Athanasius, Jerome, and Epiphanius; I mean, for instance, Eusebius, Cyril of Jerusalem, and others who were more or less connected with the Semi-Arians. If, then, we see that in all points, as regards the sacraments and sacramentals, the Church and its ministers, the form of worship, and other religious duties of Christians, Eusebius and Cyril agree entirely with the most orthodox of their contemporaries, with those by party and country most separated from them, we have a proof that that system, whatever it turns out to be, was Catholic before their time—i. e.

before the establishment of Christianity under Constantine; in other words, that we must look for the gradual corruption of the Church, if it is to be found, not when wealth pampered it, and power and peace brought its distant portions together, but while it was yet poor, humble, and persecuted, in those times which are commonly considered pure and primitive. Again, the genius of Arianism, as a party and a doctrine, was to discard antiquity and mystery; that is, to resist and expose what is commonly called priest-craft. In proportion, then, as Cyril and Eusebius partook of that spirit, *so far* would they be in their own cast of mind indisposed to the Catholic system, both considered in itself and as being imposed on them.

Now have the writers in question any leaning or tenderness for the theology of Luther and Calvin? rather they are as unconscious of its existence as of modern chemistry or astronomy. That faith is a closing with Divine mercy, not a submission to a Divine announcement, that justification and sanctification are distinct, that good works do not benefit the Christian, that the Church is not Christ's ordinance and instrument, and that heresy and dissent are not necessarily and intrinsically evil: notions such as these they do not oppose, simply because, to all appearance, they never heard of them. To take a single passage, which first occurs, in which Eusebius gives us his notion of the Catholic Church. "These attempts," he says, speaking of the arts of the enemy, "did not long avail him, Truth ever consolidating itself, and, as time goes on, shining into broader day. For while the devices of adversaries were extinguished at once, undone by their

very impetuosity,—one heresy after another presenting its own novelty, the former specimens ever dissolving and wasting variously in manifold and multiform shapes,—the brightness of the Catholic and only true Church went forward increasing and enlarging, yet ever in the same things and in the same way, beaming on the whole race of Greeks and barbarians with the awfulness, and simplicity, and nobleness, and sobriety, and purity of its divine polity and philosophy. Thus the calumny against our whole creed died with its day, and there continued alone our discipline, sovereign among all, and acknowledged to be pre-eminent in awfulness, sobriety, and divine and philosophical doctrines; so that no one of this day dares to cast any base reproach upon our faith, nor any such calumny such as it was once usual for our enemies to use."—*Hist.* iv. 7.

Or to take a passage on a different subject, which almost comes first to hand from St. Cyril :—"Only be of good cheer, only work, only strive cheerfully; for nothing is lost. Every prayer of thine, every psalm thou singest is recorded; every alms-deed, every fast is recorded; every marriage duly observed is recorded; continence kept for God's sake is recorded; but the first crowns in record are those of virginity and purity; and thou shalt shine as an Angel. But as thou hast gladly listened to the good things, listen without shrinking to the contrary. Every covetous deed of thine is recorded; every fleshly deed, every perjury, every blasphemy, every sorcery, every theft, every murder. All these things are henceforth recorded, if thou do these after baptism; for thy former deeds are blotted out."—*Cat.* xv. 23.

Cyril and Eusebius, I conceive, do not serve at all better than Origen to show that faith is a feeling; that it makes a man independent of the Church, and is efficacious apart from baptism or works. I do not know any ancient divines of whom more can be made. However, in a hopeless case, as it seems to me, let us turn to what promises best at first sight for modern divinity,—the history of Aerius, Jovinian, and Vigilantius, who may be called, though by a very lax analogy, the Luther, Calvin, and Zwingle, of the fourth century. And they have been so considered both by Protestants and by their opponents; so covetous after all of precedent are innovators, so prepared are Catholics to believe that there is nothing new under the sun. Let me, then, briefly state the history and tenets of these three religionists.

Aerius was an intimate friend of Eustathius, bishop of Sebaste, in Armenia, of whom we have already heard in the history of St. Basil. Both had embraced a monastic life; and both were Arians in creed. Eustathius, being raised to the episcopate, ordained his friend presbyter, and set him over the almshouse, or hospital of the see. A quarrel followed, from whatever cause; Aerius left his post, and accused Eustathius of covetousness, as it would appear, unjustly. Next he collected a large number of persons of both sexes in the open country, where they braved the severe weather of that climate. A congregation implies a creed, and Aerius founded or formed his own on the following: 1. That there was no difference between bishop and presbyter. 2. That it was Judaical to observe Easter, because Christ is our

Passover. 3. That it was useless, or rather mischievous, to name the dead in prayer, or to give alms for them. 4. That fasting was Judaical, and a yoke of bondage. If it be right to fast, he added, each should choose his own day; for instance, Sunday rather than Wednesday and Friday: while Passion Week he spent in feasting and merriment. And this is pretty nearly all we know of Aerius, who flourished between A. D. 360 and 370.

Jovinian was a Roman monk, and was condemned, first by Siricius at Rome, then by St. Ambrose, and other bishops, at Milan, about A. D. 390. He taught, 1. That eating with thanksgiving was just as good as fasting. 2. That, *cæteris paribus*, celibacy, widowhood, and marriage, were on a level in the baptized. 3. That there was no difference of rewards hereafter for those who had preserved their baptism; and, 4. That those who had been baptized with full faith could not fall; if they did, they had been baptized, like Simon Magus, only with water. He persuaded persons of both sexes at Rome, who had for years led a single life, to desert it. The emperor Honorius had him transported to an island on the coast of Dalmatia; he died in the beginning of the fifth century.

Vigilantius was a priest of Gaul or Spain, and flourished just at the time Jovinian died: he taught that those who reverenced relics were idolaters; that continence and celibacy were wrong, as leading to the worst scandals; that lighting candles in churches during the day, in honour of the martyrs, was wrong, as being a heathen rite; that apostles and martyrs had no presence at their tombs; that it was useless

to pray for the dead; that it was better to keep wealth, and practise habitual charity, than to strip one's self of one's property once for all; and that it was wrong to retire into the desert. This is what we learn of these three (so-called) reformers, from the writings of Epiphanius and Jerome.

Now it may be argued, "What can you require more than this? Here you have at the time of a great catastrophe, Scriptural truth preserved, as it were, fossile, in the burning matter which destroyed it, in the persecuting language of Epiphanius and Jerome. When corruptions began to press themselves on the notice of Christians, here you find three witnesses, raising their distinct and solemn protest in different parts of the Church, independently of each other, in Gaul, in Italy, and in Asia Minor, against prayers for the dead, veneration of relics, candles in the daytime, the merit of celibacy, the need of fasting, the observance of days, difference in future rewards, the defectibility of the regenerate, and the divine origin of episcopacy. Here is pure and scriptural Protestantism." Such is the phenomenon on which a few remarks are now to be offered.

1. I observe then, first, that this case so presented to us, does not answer the purpose required. The doctrine of these three Protestants, if I am to be forced into calling them so, is, after all, but negative. We know what they protested *against*, not what they protested *for*. We do not know what the system of doctrine and ritual was which they substituted for the Catholic, or whether they had any such. Though they differed from the ancients, there is no proof that they agreed with the moderns. Parties which

differ from a common third, do not necessarily agree with each other; from two negative propositions nothing is inferred. For instance, the moral temper and doctrinal character of the sixteenth century is best symbolized by its views about faith and justification, to which I have already referred. This is its positive shape, as far as it may be considered positive at all. Now, does any one mean to maintain, that Aerius, Jovinian, or Vigilantius, held justification by faith only in the sense of John Wesley, or of John Newton? Did they consider that baptism was a thing of nought; that faith did every thing; that faith was trust, and the perfection of faith assurance; that it consisted in believing that "I am pardoned;" and that works might be left to themselves, to come as they might, as being *necessary* fruits of faith, without our trouble? Did they know any thing of the "apprehensive" power of faith, or of man's proneness to consider his imperfect services, done in and by grace, as adequate to purchase eternal life? There is no proof they did. Let them—these three protesters—be ever so cogent an argument against the Catholic creed, this does not bring them a whit nearer to the Protestant; though in fact they are little of an argument, even at first sight, against the Catholic, since most of the views and practices which they oppose in the fourth century, had been held in the Church in the first, second, and third.

Further, even if a modern wished, he would not be able to confine himself to the negative creed of these primitive protesters, whatever his particular persuasion might be. Their protest suits no sect whatever of this day. It is either too narrow or too

liberal. The Episcopalian, as he is styled, will not go along with Aerius's notions about bishops; nor will the Lutheran subscribe to the final perseverance of the saints; nor will the strict Calvinist allow that all fasting is Judaical; nor will the Baptist admit the efficacy of baptism: one man will wonder why none of the three protested against the existence of the Church itself; another that none of them denied the received doctrine of penance; a third, that all three let pass the received doctrine of the Eucharist. Their protestations are either too much or too little for any one of their present admirers.

Or, again, do we wish to fix upon what *can* be detected in their creed of a positive character, and distinct from their protests? We happen to be told what it was in the case of one of them. Aerius was an Arian; does this mend matters? Is there any agreement at all between him and Luther here? If Aerius is an authority against bishops, or against set fasts, why is he not an authority against the Creed of St. Athanasius?

2. What has been last said, leads to a further remark. I observe, then, that if two or three men in the fourth century are sufficient, against the general voice of the Church, to disprove one doctrine, then, still more, are two or three of an early century able to disprove another. Why should protesters in century four be more entitled to a hearing than protesters in century three? Now it so happens, that as Aerius, Jovinian, and Vigilantius in the fourth protested against austerities, so did Praxeas, Noetus, and Sabellius in the third protest against the Catholic or Athanasian doctrine of the Holy Trinity. A much

stronger case surely could be made out in favour of the latter protest than of the former. Noetus was of Asia Minor, Praxeas taught in Rome, Sabellius in Africa. Nay, we read, that in the latter country it prevailed among the common people, then, and at an earlier date, to a very great extent, and that the true doctrine was hardly preached in the Churches.

3. Again, the only value of the protest of these three men would be, of course, that they *represented* others; that they were exponents of a state of opinion which prevailed either in their day or before them, and which was being overpowered by the popular corruptions. What are Aerius and Jovinian to me as individuals? They are worth nothing, unless they can be considered as organs and witnesses of an expiring cause. Now, it does not appear that they had any notion themselves that they were speaking in behalf of any living or dead besides themselves. They argued against prayers for the departed from reason, and against celibacy, hopeless as the case might seem, from Scripture. They ridiculed one usage, and showed the ill consequence of another. All this might be very cogent in itself, but it was the conduct of men who stood by themselves and were conscious of it. If Jovinian had known of writers of the second and third centuries holding the same views, Jovinian would have been as prompt to quote them, as Lutherans are to quote Jovinian. Why, then, is the fourth century to prove what the second and third disavow? Surely we may fairly ask for pure and primitive heretics, independents of the Apostolic age, before we defer to them, and must not be put off with the dark and fallible protests of the Nicene era.

Far different is the tone of Epiphanius in his answer to Aerius: "If one need refer," he says, speaking of fasting, "to the constitution of the Apostles, why did they there determine the fourth and sixth day to be ever a fast, except Pentecost? and concerning the six days of the Pascha, why do they order us to take nothing at all but bread, salt, and water? Which of these parties is the rather correct? this deceived man, who but now has come into public, and is still alive, or they who were witnesses before us, possessing before our time the tradition in the Church, and they, having received it from their fathers, and those very fathers again having learned it from those who lived before them. The Church has received it, and it is unanimously confessed in the whole world, before Aerius and Aerians were born." —*Hær.* 75. § 6.

4. Once more, there is this very observable fact in the case of each of the three, that their respective protests seem to have arisen from some personal motive. Certainly what happens to a man's self often brings a thing home to his mind more forcibly, makes him contemplate it steadily, and leads to a successful investigation into its merits. Yet still, where we know personal feelings to exist in the maintenance of any doctrine, we look more narrowly at the proof for ourselves; thinking it not impossible that the parties may have made up their minds on grounds short of reason. It is natural to feel distrust of controversialists, who, to all appearance, would not have been earnest against a doctrine or practice, except that it galled them. Now it so happens, that each of these three Reformers lies open to this im-

putation. Aerius is expressly declared by Epiphanius to have been Eustathius's competitor for the see of Sebaste, and to have been disgusted at failing. *He* is the preacher against bishops. Jovinian was bound by a monastic vow, and *he* protests against fasting and coarse raiment. Vigilantius was a priest; and, therefore, *he* disapproves the celibacy of the clergy. No opinion at all is here ventured in favour of clerical celibacy; still it is remarkable that in the latter, as in the two former cases, private feeling and public protest should have gone together.

These distinct considerations are surely quite sufficient to take away our interest in these three Reformers. These men are not an *historical clue* to a lost primitive creed, more than Origen or Tertullian; and much less do they afford any support to the creed of those moderns who would fain shelter themselves behind them. That there were abuses in the Church then, as at all times, no one, I suppose, will deny. There may have been extreme opinions and extreme acts, over-honour paid to saints, fraud in the production of relics, extravagance in praising celibacy, formality in fasting; and such errors would justify a protest, which the Catholic Fathers themselves are not slow to make; but they would not justify that utter reprobation of relics, of celibacy, and of fasting, of episcopacy, of prayers for the dead, and of the doctrine of defectibility, which these men avowed,—avowed without the warrant of the first ages, on grounds of private reason, under the influence of personal feeling, and with the accompaniment of but suspicious orthodoxy. For the present, then, I give up the search after Protestantism in

Antiquity as a failure;—however, before ending the chapter, it may be as well to give a specimen of the kind of answer which the Catholic writers made to these heretics; so I will extract two passages from St. Jerome, one in behalf of fasting against Jovinian, and one in behalf of the martyrs against Vigilantius. The Scriptural tone of both should be observed.

1. Adam, he observes to Jovinian, received the command in Paradise to observe fast as to one tree, while he ate of the rest. The blessedness of Paradise could not be confirmed to him without abstinence from food. As long as he fasted, he was in Paradise: he ate, and was cast out. How lost Esau his birthright? for the sake of food, with an impatience which tears would not wash away. Israel, when making for the land flowing with milk and honey, longs after the flesh, gourds, and leeks of Egypt, and despises the food of Angels. Moses, fasting on Sinai for forty days and nights, proved, in the very letter, that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word of God; whereas the full people were the while fashioning their idol. Nor were the tables of the law inscribed a second time without a second fast. What excess had lost, abstinence regained; to show us that as eating forfeited Paradise, fasting recovers it. Elias, after a forty days' fast, saw God in Horeb. Samuel and Hezekiah gained victory over the enemy by a fast; by a fast, Nineveh averted God's wrath; by a fast, impious Ahab delayed it. Hannah, by fasting, gained a son; by fasting, Daniel gained to interpret the king's dream. After an abstinence of three weeks from pleasant meat, an Angel was sent to him. David humbled himself with fasting. The

prophet from Judah lost his life from not fasting; and the lion shamed him by not eating the ass. In the New Testament, Anna by fasting gained a sight of her Lord. The Baptist lived on locusts and wild honey. Cornelius fasted, and was rewarded by Baptism. Paul adds fastings to his shipwrecks and perils. Timothy, his disciple, drank water only. "Once," he presently continues, addressing Jovinian, "once, your foot was bare; now it has not only a shoe, but an ornamental one. Then you wore a shaggy tunic and a black vest: you were in mourning garb, pale in face, and rough in hand; now you parade in linen, in silk, in the figured stuffs of Atrebatæ, and the attire of Laodicea. Your cheeks are red; your skin is sleek; your hair is dressed behind and before; your paunch is protuberant; your shoulders are round; your throat is full; and your jaws are so fat that your words are almost strangled. Certainly, in such a contrast of food and clothing, there must be fault on one side or the other. Not that I will impute sin to food or to dress; but that the variation and change for the worse is next door to a reproach."—ii. 21.

2. The same Father is even more energetic in defence of the martyrs against Vigilantius:—"Who, madman, ever at any time, adored the martyrs? who took man for God? did not Paul and Barnabas, when thought to be Jupiter and Mercury by the Lycaonians, who would sacrifice to them, tear their garments, and say they were men? We read the same of Peter, who raised Cornelius when desirous to worship him, saying, 'Rise, for I also am a man.' And do you venture to talk of that 'something or other which we honour by carrying about in a small urn?'

I want to know what you mean by 'something or other.' Speak out, and blaspheme freely. 'Some dust or other,' you say, 'wrapped up in precious linen in a small urn.' He grieves that the remains of martyrs have a precious covering, and are not tied up in rags or sackcloth, or cast on the dunghill; that Vigilantius alone may be worshipped in his liquor and his sleep! What! are we sacrilegious in entering the Basilicas of the Apostles? Then was the Emperor Constantius so, who translated the sacred remains of Andrew, Luke, and Timothy to Constantinople, at which demons howl, yea, the tenants of Vigilantius acknowledge their presence. Sacrilegious, too, is Arcadius, Augustus at this time, who has translated, after so long a period, the bones of blessed Samuel from Judea into Thrace. All the bishops, not only sacrilegious but infatuate, who carried in silk and gold a vile thing and crumbling ashes. Fools, the people of all the Churches, who met the sacred relics, and received them as joyfully as if they saw the prophet present and alive; so that, from Palestine even unto Chalcedon, swarms of people intermingled continuously, and with one voice resounded the praises of Christ. It seems they were adoring Samuel, not Christ, whose Levite and prophet Samuel was!

"'You reverence the dead, and therefore you blaspheme.' Read the Gospel, 'I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He is not God of the dead, but of the living.' If, then, they live, they are not shut up in an honourable prison, as you would have it. For you say that the souls of Apostles and martyrs rest either in Abraham's bosom, or under the altar of God, nor can be present from

their tombs, and where they will. It seems they have a sort of senatorial dignity, not shut up, indeed, with murderers in the most horrible prison, but in free and honourable confinement in isles of the blessed and the Elysian fields! Are you the man to prescribe laws to God? will you put chains on Apostles? so that, till the judgment-day, those are kept in ward, and are not with their Lord, of whom it is written, 'They follow the Lamb, whithersoever He goeth?' If the Lamb be everywhere, they, too, must be considered everywhere who are with the Lamb. And, whereas the devil and the demons range the whole earth, and by their extreme rapidity are everywhere present, shall martyrs, after the outpouring of their blood, be shut up under the altar so as to be unable to leave it?

"You say, in your book, that 'while we live we can pray for each other, but after death no one's prayer for another is to be heard; especially since martyrs, though praying for the vengeance of their own blood, have not availed to obtain it.' If Apostles and martyrs, while in the body, can pray for others, when they ought as yet to be solicitous about themselves, how much rather after their crown, their victory, and their triumph? Paul, the Apostle, says, that two hundred and seventy-six souls in the ship were granted to him; shall Vigilantius, a living dog, be better than he, a dead lion? So I might rightly argue from Ecclesiastes, could I confess that Paul was dead in spirit. In short, saints are not said to be dead, but asleep.

"We do not light wax tapers in the broad day, as you idly slander us, but to relieve the darkness of

night by this substitute; and we watch unto the light, lest, blinded with you, we may sleep in the dark. If any secular men, or at least religious women, through ignorance and simplicity, of whom we may truly say, 'They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge;' if such have done this for the honour of martyrs, what do you lose by it? Once, even Apostles complained of the loss of the ointment, but they were reproved by the Lord's voice. Not that Christ needed ointment, nor the martyrs wax lights; and yet that woman so acted in Christ's honour, and her devotion was accepted. And whoever light wax tapers are rewarded according to their faith, as the Apostle speaks, 'Let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind.' Do you call such men idolaters? I do not deny that all of us who believe in Christ have come out of the errors of idolatry; for we are not born, but new-born Christians. And because we once honoured idols, ought we now not to honour God, lest we seem to venerate Him with an honour like that paid to idols? That was done to idols, and therefore was detestable; this is done to martyrs, and therefore is allowable. For, even without the remains of martyrs, throughout the Churches of the East, when the Gospel is read, lights are lit, while the sun is bright, not at all to chase away the dark, but as a sign of rejoicing. Whence, too, those Virgins in the Gospel have always their lamps lit. And the Apostles are told to have their loins girded, and burning lights in their hands: and John Baptist is said to be a 'burning and shining light;' that under the type of material light might be signified that light of which we read in the

Psalter, 'Thy word, O Lord, is a lanthorn unto my feet, and a light unto my paths.'"—5—8.

I have already allowed that there are points in Jerome's tone of mind which I receive at the Church's hands without judging; and, again, that superstitions existed in the Church of his day about the holy relics, as, indeed, he seems to grant in the above extract; yet, after all allowances on this, and the other subjects which have here come before us, I do not see that our Protestant brethren gain much by their appeal to the history of Aerius, Jovinian, and Vigilantius.

CHAPTER XVI.

CANONS OF THE APOSTLES.

"Let Thy Thummim and Thy Urim be with Thy holy one, whom Thou didst prove at Massah, and with whom Thou didst strive at the waters of Meribah; who said unto his father and to his mother, I have not seen him; neither did he acknowledge his brethren, nor knew his own children: for they have observed Thy word and kept Thy covenant."

Such is the testimony borne in different ways by Origen, Eusebius, and Cyril, Aerius, Jovinian, and Vigilantius, to the immemorial reception, among Christians, of those doctrines and practices which the private judgment of this age considers to be unscriptural. Let the object with which they have been adduced be clearly understood: not thereby directly to prove the truth of those doctrines and practices; but, the hypothesis having been hazarded in some quarters, that *perhaps* those doctrines and practices were an early corruption, and the burden of proving a negative being thrown upon us by men who are better pleased to suggest doubts than to settle anything, we, in our excess of consideration, are going about from one quarter to another, prying and extravagating beyond the beaten paths of orthodoxy, for the chance of detecting some sort of testimony in favour of our opponents. With this object I have fallen upon the writers aforesaid, and since they have been more or less accused of heterodoxy, I thought

there was a chance of their subserving the cause of Protestantism, which the Catholic Fathers certainly do not subserve; but they, though differing from each other most materially, and some of them differing from the Church, do not any one of them approximate to the tone or language of the movement of 1517. Every additional instance of this kind goes indirectly to corroborate the testimony of the Catholic Church.

The more we can vary our witnesses, the better. The consent of Fathers is one sort of witness to Apostolical truth; the accordance of heretics is another; received usage is a third. I shall now give, at some length, an instance of this last mentioned, as afforded in the existence of the Apostolical Canons[1]; and with that view, I must beg indulgence once in a way, to engage myself in a dry and somewhat tedious discussion. These Canons were once supposed to be, strictly speaking, Apostolical, and published before A.D. 50. On the other hand, it has been contended that they were composed by some heretic after 450. Our own divines maintain that they were published before 325, and were undoubtedly the digest of Catholic authorities in the course of the second and third, or at the end of the second century, and were received and used in most parts of Christendom. This view has since been acquiesced in by the theological world, so far as this, to suppose the matter and the enactment of the Canons of the highest antiquity, even though the

[1] The following account is principally from Bishops Beveridge and Pearson.

edition which we possess was not published so early as Bishop Beveridge, for instance, supposes. At the same time it is acknowledged by all parties, that they, as well as some other early documents, have suffered from interpolation, and perhaps by an heretical hand.

They are in number eighty-five, of which the first fifty are considered of superior authority to the remaining thirty-five. What has been conjectured to be their origin will explain the distinction. It was the custom of the early Church, as is well known, to settle in council such points in her discipline, ordinances, and worship, as the Apostles had not prescribed in Scripture, as the occasion arose, after the pattern of their own proceedings in the fifteenth chapter of the Acts; and this, as far as might be, after their unwritten directions, or their practice, or, at least, their mind, or as it is called in Scripture, their "minding" or "spirit [1]." Thus she decided upon the question of Easter, upon that of heretical baptism, and the like. And after the same precedent in the Acts, she recorded her decisions in formal decrees, and "delivered them for to keep" through the cities in which her members were found. The Canons in question are supposed to be some of these decrees, of which, first and nearest to the Apostles' times, or in the time of their immediate successors, were published fifty; and in the following age, thirty-five more, which had been enacted in the interval. They claim, then, to be, first, the recorded judgment of great portions of the Ante-

[1] *φρόνημα.*

Nicene Church, chiefly in the eastern provinces, upon certain matters in dispute, and to be of authority so far as that Church may be considered a representative of the mind of the Apostles; next, they profess to embody in themselves positive decisions and injunctions of the Apostles, though without clearly discriminating how much is thus directly Apostolical, and how much not. I will here attempt to state some of the considerations which show both their antiquity and authority, and afterwards use them for the purpose which has led me to mention them.

1. In the first place, it would seem quite certain that, as, on the one hand, Councils were held in the primitive Church, so on the other, they enacted certain Canons. When, then, a collection presents itself professing to consist of the Ante-Nicene Canons, there is nothing at all to startle us; it only professes to set before us that which we know any how must have existed. We may conjecture, if we please, that the fact that there were Canons may have suggested and encouraged a counterfeit. Certainly; but though the fact that there were such will account for a counterfeit, it will not account for the original being lost; on the contrary, what is known to have once existed as a rule of conduct, is likely to continue in existence, except under particular circumstances. Which of the two this collection is, the genuine or the counterfeit, must depend on other considerations; but if these be in favour of its genuineness, then this antecedent probability will be an important confirmation.

Canons, I say, must have existed, whether these

be the real ones or no; and the circumstance that there were real ones, must have tended to make it difficult to substitute others. It would be no easy thing in our own Church to pass off another set of articles for the Thirty-nine, and obliterate the genuine: Canons are public property, and have to be acted upon by large bodies. Accordingly, as might be expected, the Nicene Council, when enacting Canons of its own, refers to certain Canons as already existing, and speaks of them in that familiar and indirect way which would be natural under the circumstances, just as we speak of our Rubrics or Articles. The Fathers of that Council mention certain descriptions of persons whom "*the Canon* admits into holy orders;" they determine that a certain rule shall be in force, "according to the Canon which says so and so;" they speak of a transgression of the Canon, and proceed to explain and enforce it. Nor is the Nicene the only Council which recognizes the existence of certain Canons, or rules, by which the Church was at that time bound. The Councils of Antioch, Gangra, Constantinople, and Carthage, in the same century, do so likewise: so do individual Fathers, Alexander, Athanasius, Basil, Julius, and others.

Now here we have lighted upon an important circumstance, whatever becomes of the particular collection of Canons before us. It seems that at the Nicene Council, only two centuries and a quarter after St. John's death, about the distance of time at which we live from the Hampton Court Conference, all Christendom confessed, that from time immemorial it had been guided by certain eccle-

siastical rules, which it considered of authority, which it did not ascribe to any particular persons or synods, (a sign of great antiquity,) and which writers of the day assigned to the Apostles. I suppose we know pretty well, at this day, what the customs of our Church have been since James the First's time, or the Reformation; and if respectable writers at present were to state some of them,—for instance, that it is the rule of the Protestant Church that the king should name the bishops, that convocation should not sit without his leave, or that Easter should be kept according to the Roman rule,—we should think foreigners very unreasonable who doubted their word. Now, in the case before us, we find the Church Catholic, the first time it had ever met together since the Apostles' days, speaking as a matter of course of the rules to which it had ever been accustomed to defer. If we knew no more than this, and did not know what the rules were; or if, knowing what they were, we yet decide, as we well may, that the particular rules are not of continual obligation; yet, in knowing that rules of some kind were in force, we shall possess a fact incompatible with that free-and-easy mode of religion in which Protestants glory. They glory in being independent: they think it a beauty to be all pulling different ways, and to have as many various rites and regimens as there are tastes and likings in the world. They can be quite sentimental and poetical on the subject; expatiate on the excellence of "agreeing to differ;" descant on the variety of nature, and insist, as philosophers, upon the immateriality of "differences in Church government," while what they call "doctrine" is

preserved, or while hearts are one. There is a popular story of a woman fainting on a Sunday, as the whole town was coming from worship, and an Anabaptist providing a chair, and a Quaker a smelling-bottle, and a Roman Catholic a handkerchief, and a Churchman running for a doctor, and the doctor turning out to be a Swedenborgian. It is something of this kind; and then a sagacious father, who seems to have been leading his son round the town instead of taking him to divine service anywhere, points it out to his notice thus:—"See, my boy, what mankind were made to agree in, and what to differ in!" What would the stern old fathers of Nicæa have said to this?—with their notions of "the Canon," what would they have said to a mixed set of religionists, *zonis solutis*, who glory in having nothing external in common, and who prate about "the superiority of unanimity to uniformity?" Or, as I should rather put it, what do our religionists say to it? or do they get themselves to contemplate the fact, of a vast number of leading men, (to put the matter at the lowest,) from all parts of Christendom, witnessing to the existence of a state of things which they must have known as perfectly as we know what has happened ever since the Reformation, nay, which occupies a less period, and describing circumstances which are quite irreconcilable with modern notions, in the same unhesitating and quiet tone which we should use in speaking of the last three centuries? I believe when they get themselves to consider it, they are obliged,—they do not scruple,—to say, that an universal corruption, a sudden lapse of the Church, took place *immediately*

after the Apostles; though how they can support this hypothesis, when it is narrowly considered, does not appear.

But to return. Even though the Canons we possess were not genuine, and though the Fathers and the Councils which refer to Canons did not mention what was the subject of them, yet the very fact, I say, that there *were* Canons from time immemorial, would be a sufficient confutation of the antithesis now so popular between unanimity and uniformity—it establishes the *principle* of uniformity as being Apostolical. But we do know, from the works of the Fathers, the *subjects* of these Canons, and that to the number of thirty or forty of them; so that we might form a code, as far as it goes, of primitive discipline, quite independent of the particular Collection which is under discussion. However, it is remarkable that all of these thirty or forty are found in this collection, being altogether nearly half the whole number, so that the only question is, whether the rest are of the same value of which we know a great proportion of them to be. It is worth noticing, that *no* Ecclesiastical Canon is mentioned in the historical documents of the primitive era which is not found in the Collection, for it shows that, whoever compiled it, the work was done with considerable care. The opponents to its genuineness bring, indeed, several exceptions, as they wish to consider them; but these admit of so satisfactory an explanation as to illustrate the proverb, that *exceptio probat regulam.*

Before going on, however, to consider the whole

Collection, let us see in what terms the ancient writers referred to speak of those particular Canons which they cite.

Athanasius speaks as follows:—"*Canons and forms*," he says, when describing the extraordinary violences of the Arians, "*were not given to the Churches in this day, but were handed down from our fathers well and securely.* Nor again, has the faith had its beginning in this day, but has passed on even to us from the Lord through His disciples. Rouse yourselves, then, my brethren, to prevent that from perishing unawares in the present day *which has been observed in the Churches from ancient times down to us*, and ourselves from incurring a responsibility in what has been intrusted to us."—*Ep. Encycl.* 1. It is remarkable, in this extract, that St. Athanasius accurately distinguishes between the Faith which came from Christ, and the Canons received from the Fathers of old time: which is just the distinction which our divines are accustomed to make.

Again: the Arians, by simoniacal dealings with the civil power, had placed Gregory in the see of Alexandria. Athanasius observes upon this—"Such conduct is both *a violation of the Ecclesiastical Canons*, and forces the heathen to blaspheme, as if appointments were made, not by Divine ordinance, but by merchandise and secular influence."—*Ibid.* 2.

Arsenius, bishop of Hypsela, who had been involved in the Meletian[1] schism, and had acted in a

[1] The Egyptian Meletius, from which this schism has its name, must not be confounded with Meletius of Antioch.

hostile way towards Athanasius, at length reconciled himself to the Church. In his letter to Athanasius he promises "to be obedient to *the Ecclesiastical Canon*, according to ancient usage, and never to put forth any regulation, whether about bishops or any other public ecclesiastical matter, without the sanction of his metropolitan, but to *submit to all the established Canons*."—*Apol. contr. Arian.* 69.

In like manner, St. Basil, after speaking of certain crimes for which a deacon should be reduced to lay communion, proceeds, "for *it is an ancient Canon*, that they who lose their degree should be subjected to this kind of punishment only."—*Ep.* 188. Again—"*The Canon* altogether excludes from the ministry those who have been twice married."

When Arius and his abettors were excommunicated by Alexander of Alexandria, they betook themselves to Palestine, and were re-admitted into the Church by the bishops of that country. On this, Alexander observes as follows:—"A very heavy imputation, doubtless, lies upon such of my brethren as have ventured on this act, in that it is *a violation of the Apostolical Canon*."—*Theod. Hist.* i. 4.

When Eusebius declined being translated from the see of Cæsarea to Antioch, Constantine complimented him on his "observance of the commandments of God, *the Apostolical Canon*, and the rule of the Church;"—*Vit. Constant.* iii. 61—which last seems to mean the regulation passed at Nicæa.

In like manner, Julius, bishop of Rome, speaks of a violation of "*the Apostles' Canons*;" and a Council held at Constantinople, A. D. 394, which was attended by Gregory Nyssen, Amphilochius,

and Flavian, of a determination of "*the Apostolical Canons.*"

It will be observed, that in some of these instances the Canons are spoken of in the plural, when the particular infraction which occasions their mention is in the singular. This shows they were collected into a code, if, indeed, that need be proved; for in truth, that various Canons should exist, and be in force, and yet not be put together, is just as unlikely as that no collection should be made of the statutes passed in a session of parliament.

With this historical information about the existence, authority, and subject matter of certain Canons in the Church from time immemorial, we should come to many anti-Protestant conclusions, even if the particular code we possess turn out to have no intrinsic authority. And now let us see how the matter stands as regards this code of eighty-five Canons.

2. If this collection existed *as* a collection in the time of the above writers and councils, then, considering they allude to nearly half its Canons, and that no Canons are anywhere producible which are not in it, and that they do seem to allude to a collection, and that no other collection is producible, we certainly could not avoid the conclusion that they referred to *it*, and that therefore, in quoting parts of it they sanction the whole. If no book is to be accounted genuine except such parts of it as happen to be expressly cited by other writers,—if it may not be regarded as a whole, and what is actually cited made to bear up and carry with it what is not cited,—no ancient book extant can be proved to be genuine.

We believe Virgil's Æneid to be Virgil's, because we know he wrote an Æneid, and because particular passages which we find in it, and in no other book, are contained, under the name of Virgil, in subsequent writers or in criticisms, or in accounts of it. We do not divide it into rhapsodies, *because* it only exists in fragments in the testimony of later literature. For the same reason, if the Canons before us can be shown to have existed as one book in Athanasius's time, it is natural to conceive that they are the very book to which he and others refer. All depends on this. If the collection was made after his time, of course he referred to some other; but if it existed in his time, it is more natural to suppose that there was one collection than two distinct ones, so similar, especially since history is silent about there being two.

However, I conceive it is not worth while to insist upon so early a formation of the existing collection. Whether it existed in Athanasius' time, or was formed afterwards, and formed by friend or foe, heretic or Catholic, seems to me immaterial, as I shall by and by show. First, however, I will state, as candidly as I can, the arguments for and against its antiquity *as* a collection.

Now there can be no doubt that the early Canons were formed into one body; moreover, certain early writers speak of them under the name of "the Apostles' Canons," and "the Apostolical Canons." So far I have already said. Now, certain collectors of canons, of A.D. (more or less) 550, and they no common authorities, also speak of "the Apostolical Canons," and incorporate them into their own larger collec-

tions; and these which they speak of are the very body of Canons which we now possess under the name. We know it, for the digest of these collectors is preserved. No reason can be assigned why they should not be speaking of the *same* collection which Gregory Nyssen and Amphilochius speak of, who lived a century and a half before them; no reason, again, why Nyssen and Amphilochius should not mean the same as Athanasius and Julius, who lived fifty to seventy years earlier than themselves. The writers of A.D. 550 might be just as certain that they and St. Athanasius quoted the same work, as we, at this day, that our copy of it is the same as Beveridge's, Pearson's, or Ussher's.

The authorities at the specified date (A.D. 550) are three,—Dionysius Exiguus, John of Antioch, patriarch of Constantinople, and the Emperor Justinian. The learning of Justinian is well known, not to mention that he speaks the opinion of the ecclesiastical lawyers of his age. As to John of Antioch, and Dionysius, since their names are not so familiar to most of us, it may be advisable to say thus much, —that John had been a lawyer, and was well versed both in civil and ecclesiastical matters; hence he has the title of Scholasticus; while Dionysius is the framer of the Christian era, as we still reckon it. They both made Collections of the Canons of the Church, the latter in Latin, and they both include the Apostolical Canons, as we have them, in their editions; with this difference, however, (which does not at present concern us,) that Dionysius publishes but the first fifty, while John of Antioch enumerates the whole eighty-five.

Such is the main argument for the existence of the *collection* which we possess, at the end of the third century; viz. that, whereas *a* collection is acknowledged at that date, *this* collection is acknowledged by competent authorities at the end of the fifth. On the other hand, when we inspect the language which Dionysius uses concerning them, in his prefatory epistle, we shall find something which requires explanation. His words are these, addressed to Stephen, bishop of Salona:—"We have, in the first place, translated from the Greek what are called the Canons of the Apostles; *which, as we wish to apprise your holiness, have not gained an easy credit from very many persons.* At the same time, some of the decrees of the [Roman] pontiffs, at a later date, seem to be taken from these very Canons." Dionysius must mean, that they were not received *as* the Apostles'; for that they were received, or at least nearly half of them, is, as I have said, an historical fact, whatever becomes of the collection as a collection. He must mean, that a claim had been advanced that they were to be received as part of the apostolic *revelation;* and he must deny that they had more than *ecclesiastical* authority. The distinction between divine and ecclesiastical injunctions requires little explanation: the latter are imposed by the Church for the sake of decency and order, as a matter of expedience, safety, propriety, or piety. Such is the rule among ourselves, that dissenting teachers conforming must remain silent three years before they can be ordained; or that a certain form of prayer should be prescribed for universal use in public service. On the other hand, the appointment of the Sacraments is apostolic

and divine. So again, that no one can be a bishop unless consecrated by a bishop, is apostolic; that three bishops are necessary in consecration is ecclesiastical; and, though ordinarily an imperative rule, yet, under circumstances, admits of dispensation. Or again, it has, for instance, in this day, been debated whether the sanctification of the Lord's day is a divine or an ecclesiastical appointment. Dionysius, then, in the above extract, means nothing more than to deny that the Apostles enacted these canons; or, again, that they enacted them *as* Apostles; and he goes on to say, that the popes had acknowledged the *ecclesiastical* authority of some of them by embodying them in their decrees. At the same time, his language certainly seems to show as much as this, and it is confirmed by that of other writers, that the Latin Church, though using them separately as authority, did not receive them as a collection with the implicit deference which they met with in the East; indeed, the last thirty-five, though two of them were cited at Nicæa, and one at Constantinople, A.D. 394, seem to have been in inferior account. The Canons of the General Councils took their place, and the Decrees of the popes. And this conclusion would be abundantly confirmed by a remarkable decree of Pope Gelasius, if it could be trusted as genuine, and which, any how, shows the feelings of the Latins even at a later date. Gelasius is said to have held a council of seventy bishops at Rome, A.D. 494, and to have passed a decree concerning books received in the Church, which may be made to accord to what Dionysius wrote six years later. In this decree, after enumerating the books of the Old and New

Testament, the determinations of the first four General Councils, and the works of certain of the Fathers, as being of authority, he proceeds, "But the compositions or teaching of heretics or schismatics are in nowise received by the Catholic and Apostolic Roman Church; of which a few that are extant shall be specified, which are to be avoided by Catholics." Then follows a list of "apocryphal" books, such as the works of Hermas, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Eusebius's History, Lactantius, and, among them, "the Apocryphal Book of Canons of the Apostles." Perhaps the utmost this could be taken to mean would be, that the Book of Canons had never been *received* in the Roman Church. That *some* of the canons were received in it, we know, indeed, from the words of Pope Julius already cited, and from the fact that many of them were incorporated in the decrees of the four General Councils; still the "*body* of canons" may have been peculiar to the East,—as we know, in fact, the traditions of the East and West varied from each other on certain points, as in the questions of the observance of Easter, and of heretical baptism, in the former of which, at least, Apostles themselves seem to have determined variously. Even if the decree is literally taken to mean, that the Book of Canons is the compilation of heretics, (though, if so, the works of Hermas and of Clement of Alexandria are strangely involved in the same imputation,) no serious conclusion will follow. For though the Canons were *put together* by heretics, it does not follow that they themselves are heretical; and that a great number are not, we know, from the testimony of the Fathers

in their favour, as above insisted on. If, indeed, the compiler altered, or suppressed, or invented canons, that is another matter; then he was something more than a compiler; but in merely collecting them, he as little impaired the Canons themselves as Bucer or Peter Martyr would have hurt the doctrine of our Prayer Book, had they collected together in one, without altering, the Catholic devotions of the Church before them. At the same time, if heretics did add to the matter of the Canons, *then* the witness these Canons afford to the primitive religion is still more remarkable. We know, independently of these Canons, what the kind of worship and discipline was which obtained in the Catholic Church; and in these Canons we shall *then* possess an *heretical* testimony to it quite in accordance. In that case, Protestantism will lose the chance even of heretical support, which was all it had from the first to look for.

But, as the fact really is, this decree of Gelasius' is not genuine. It is not mentioned till three hundred years after its supposed promulgation, and there is reason to believe that Gelasius, so far from rejecting, actually did receive and use the Canons in question. But the discussion of this point would be a deviation from the subject before us.

This, then, seems to be the state of the case as regards the collection or edition of Canons, whether fifty or eighty-five, which is under consideration. Speaking, not of the Canons themselves, but of this particular publication of them, I thus conclude about it,—that, whether it was made at the end of the third century, or later, there is no sufficient proof

that it was of authority; but that it is not very material that it should be proved to be of authority, nay, or to have existed in early times. Give us the Canons themselves, and we shall be able to prove the point for which I am adducing them, even though they were not formed into a collection in early times.

Indeed, it must be confessed, that probability is against this collection having ever been regarded as an authority by the ancient Church. It was an *anonymous* collection; and, as being anonymous, seemed to have no claim upon Christians. They would consider that a collection or body of Canons could only be imposed by a *Council;* and since the Council could not be produced which imposed this in particular, they had no reason to admit it. They might have been in the practice of acting upon this Canon, and that, and the third, and so on to the eighty-fifth, from time immemorial, and that as Canons, not as mere customs, and might confess the obligation of each: and yet might say, "We never looked upon them as a *code*," which should be something complete, and limited to itself. The true sanction of each was the immemorial observance of each, not its place in the collection, which implied a competent framer. Moreover, in proportion as General Councils were held, and enacted Canons, so did the vague title of mere custom, without definite sanction, become less influential, and the ancient Canons fell into disregard. And what made this still more natural, was the circumstance that the Nicene Council did re-enact a considerable number of those which it found existing. It substituted then a definite authority, which, in

after ages, would be much more intelligible than what had then become a mere matter of obscure antiquity. Nor did it tend to restore their authority, when their advocates, feeling the difficulty of their case, referred the collection to the Apostles themselves; first, because this assertion could not be maintained; next, because if it could, it would have seemingly deprived the Church of the privilege of making Canons. It would have made those usages divine which had ever been accounted only ecclesiastical. It would have become a question, whether, under such circumstances, the Church had more right to add to the code of really Apostolic Canons than to Scripture; discipline, as well as doctrine, would have been given by direct revelation, and have been included in the fundamentals of religion.

If, however, all this be so, it follows that we are not at liberty to argue, from one part of this Collection being received, that therefore the other is; as if it were one authoritative work. No number of individual Canons being proved to be of the first age, will tend to prove that the remainder are of the same. It is true; and I do not think it worth while to contest the point. For argument sake I will grant, that the bond, which ties them into one, is not of the most trustworthy and authoritative description, and will proceed to show, that even those Canons which are not formally quoted by early writers ought to be received as the rules of the Ante-Nicene Church, independently of their being found in one compilation.

3. I have already said, that nearly half of the Canons, as they stand in the Collection, are quoted

as Canons by early writers, and thus placed beyond all question, as remains of the Ante-Nicene period: the following arguments may be offered in behalf of the rest:—

(1.) They are otherwise known to express *usages* or *opinions* of the Ante-Nicene centuries. The simple question is, whether they had been reflected on, recognized, converted into principles, enacted, obeyed; whether they were the unconscious and unanimous result of the one Christian spirit[1] in every place, or were formal determinations from authority claiming obedience. This being the case, there is very little worth disputing about; for (whether we regard them as being Christian, or in the light of Christian antiquities) if uniform custom was agreeable to them, it does not matter whether they were enacted or not. If they were not, their universal observance is a still greater evidence of their extreme antiquity, which, in that case, can be hardly short of the Apostolic age; and we shall refer to them in the existing Collection, merely for convenience' sake, as being brought together in a short compass.

Nay, a still more serious conclusion will follow, from supposing them not to be enactments,—much more serious than any *we* are disposed to draw. If it be maintained, that these observances did not arise from formal injunctions on the part of the Church, then, it might be argued, the Church has no power over them. As not having imposed, she cannot abrogate, suspend, or modify them. They must be referred to a higher source, even to the inspired Apos-

[1] The ἐκκλησιαστικὸν φρόνημα.

tles; and their authority is not ecclesiastical, but divine. We are almost forced, then, to consider them as enactments, even when not appealed to by ancient writers as such, lest we should increase the authority of some of them more than seems consistent with their subject-matter.

Again, if such Canons as are not appealed to by ancient writers are nevertheless allowed to have been really enacted, on the ground of our finding historically that usage corresponds to them; it may so be that others, about which the usage is not so clearly known, are real Canons also. There is a *chance* of their being genuine; for why, in drawing the line, should we decide by the mere accident of the usage admitting or not admitting of clear historical proof?

(2.) Again, all these Canons, or at least the first fifty, are composed in a similar style; there is no reason, as far as the internal evidence goes, why one should be more primitive than another, and many, we know, certainly were in force as Canons from the earliest times.

(3.) This argument becomes much more cogent when we consider *what* that style is. It carries with it evident marks of primitive simplicity, some of which I shall instance. The first remark which would be made on reading them relates to their brevity, the breadth of the rules which they lay down, and their plain and unartificial mode of stating them. A good instance of this will be supplied by a comparison of the thirty-fifth Canon with one of a number of Canons passed at Antioch by an Arian council, held A. D. 341, and apparently using the

Apostolical Canons as a basis for its own. The former says, simply,—

"The bishops of every nation are bound to acknowledge the principal among them, and to count him as a head, and to do nothing extraordinary without his advice, but to do those things alone individually which relate to the diocese of each respectively and its towns. He, in turn, must not act without the advice of all."

These plain directions are thus amplified in the Canon of Antioch :—

"The bishops in each province are bound to acknowledge the bishop ruling in the metropolitan see, and that he has the care of the whole province, because all who have business have recourse from every quarter to the metropolis. Whence it has seemed good that he should be first in honour also, and that the other bishops should do nothing extraordinary without him, (according to that most ancient canon which has been in force from our fathers' time,) or such things only as relate to the diocese of each and the places under it. For, each bishop has power over his own diocese to administer it according to his own conscience, and to provide for the whole territory subject to his own city, so as to ordain presbyters and deacons, and to dispose all things with consideration, but to attempt no proceedings beyond this without the metropolitan bishop; and he, in turn, must not act without the advice of the rest."

Or, again, take the following instance; which, when read with the words in brackets, agrees, with

but slight exceptions, with the Antiochene, and, without them, with the Apostolical Canon:—

"All who come [to church] and hear the [holy] Scriptures read, but do not remain to prayer [with the people,] and [refuse] the holy communion [of the Eucharist] contumaciously, [these] must be put out of the Church, [until, by confession, and by showing fruits of penitence, and by entreaty, they are able to gain forgiveness."]

Now these instances will serve to illustrate the antiquity of the Apostolical Canons in several ways, besides the evidence deducible from the simplicity of their structure. It will be observed that the word "metropolis" is introduced into the Canon of Antioch; no such word occurs in that from which it is apparently formed. There it is simply said, "the principal bishop;" or, literally, the primus. This accords with the historical fact, that the word metropolitan was not introduced till the fourth century. The same remark might be made on the word "province," which occurs in the Canon of Antioch, not in the other. This contrast is strikingly brought out in two other Canons, which correspond in the two Collections. Both treat of the possessions of the Church; but the Apostolical Canon says simply, "the interests of the Church," "the goods of the Church;" but the Antiochene, composed after Christianity had been acknowledged by the civil power, speaks of "the revenue of the Church," and "the produce of the land." Again, attempts have been made to show that certain words are contained in the Canons before us which were not in use in the ante-Nicene times, but they have in every case failed, which

surely may be considered as a positive evidence in favour of their genuineness. For instance, the word "clergy," for the ministerial body, which is found in the Canons, is also used by Origen, Tertullian, and Cyprian. The word "reader," for an inferior order in the clergy, is used by Cornelius, bishop of Rome; nay, by Justin Martyr. "Altar," which is used in the Canons, is the only word used for the Lord's table by St. Cyprian, and, before him, by Tertullian and Ignatius. "Sacrifice" and "oblation," for the consecrated elements, by Clement of Rome, Justin, Irenæus, and Tertullian. This negative evidence of genuineness extends to other points, and surely is of no inconsiderable weight. We know how difficult it is so to word a forgery as to avoid all detection from incongruities of time, place, and the like. A forgery, indeed, it is hardly possible to suppose this Collection to be, both because great part of it is known to be genuine, and because no assignable object would be answered by it: but let us imagine the compiler hastily took up with erroneous traditions, or recent enactments, and joined them to the rest. Is it possible to conceive, under such circumstances, that there would be no anachronisms or other means of detection? And if there are none such, and much more if the compiler, who lived perhaps as early as the fourth century, found none such, (supposing we may assume him willing and qualified to judge of them,) nay, if Dionysius Exiguus found none such, what reasons have we for denying that they are the produce of those early times to which they claim to belong? Yet so it is; neither rite, nor heresy, nor observance, nor phrase, is found in them which is foreign to the

ante-Nicene period. Indeed, the only reason one or two persons have thrown suspicion on them has been, an unwillingness on their part to admit episcopacy, which the Canons assert; a necessity which led the same parties to deny the genuineness of St. Ignatius' epistles. And now I congratulate the reader on having come to the end of a discussion which requires more careful attention than this small work has a right to demand.

CHAPTER XVII.

CANONS OF THE APOSTLES.

"They shall teach Jacob Thy judgments, and Israel Thy law: they shall put incense before Thee, and whole burnt sacrifice upon Thine altar. Bless, Lord, his substance, and accept the work of his hands: smite through the loins of them that rise against him, and of them that hate him, that they rise not again."

From what has been said, it would appear that the Canons called Apostolical come to us under circumstances which make them of especial service in an inquiry which we are desirous of seeing carefully instituted, but which would not suit these pages. Are there discoverable in the records of antiquity any *traces* of that sudden corruption or declension of primitive Christianity which out-and-out Protestants say certainly *did* take place, or else Christianity, as we find it in history, would not be so unlike their own Christianity? or, on the other hand, is not this *argument* itself, after all, the real and sole ground of the alleged *fact*,—viz. "Christians *must* necessarily have fallen away, *or else* Protestantism is not divine?" Is the supposed declension proved historically, or is it argued and inferred that it cannot but be so, as being a necessary hypothesis, or key-stone,

for reconciling discordant evidence,—viz. ancient facts with modern opinions? In short, is there, or is there not, any ground for the imputation thus cast upon the Christianity of the second and third centuries, beyond the *necessity* of casting it on the part of the caster,—beyond the right of self-defence, and the duty of self-preservation?

However necessary and becoming as is such a struggle for life, I do not think it will avail the Protestant who makes it. The problem before him is to draw a line between the periods of purity and alleged corruption, such, as may have all the Apostles on one side, and all the Fathers on the other, which may insinuate and meander through the dove-tailings and inosculations of historical facts, and cut clean between St. John and St. Ignatius, St. Paul and St. Clement; low enough not to encroach upon the book of Acts, yet so high as to be out of the reach of all extant documents besides. And at any rate, whether he succeeds or not, so much he must grant, that if such a system of doctrine as he would now introduce ever existed in early times, it has been clean swept away as if by a deluge, suddenly, silently, and without memorial; by a deluge coming in a night, and utterly soaking, rotting, heaving up, and hurrying off, every vestige of what it found in the Church, before cock-crowing; so that "when they rose in the morning" her true seed "were all dead corpses"—nay, dead and buried—and without grave-stone. "The waters went over them; there was not one of them left; they sunk like lead in the mighty waters." Strange antitype, indeed, to the early fortunes of Israel!—then the enemy was drowned, and "Israel

saw them dead upon the sea-shore." But now, it would seem, water proceeded as a flood "out of the serpent's mouth," and covered all the witnesses, so that not even their dead bodies "lay in the streets of the great city." Let him take which of his doctrines he will, his peculiar view of self-righteousness, of formality, of superstition; his notion of faith, or of spirituality in religious worship; his denial of the virtue of the sacraments, or of the ministerial commission, or of the visible Church; or his doctrine of the divine efficacy of the Scriptures as the one appointed instrument of religious teaching; and let him consider how far antiquity, as it has come down to us, will countenance him in it. No; he must allow that the alleged deluge has done its work; yes, and has in turn disappeared itself; it has been swallowed up in the earth, mercilessly as itself was merciless.

This representation has been usually met by saying, that the extant records of primitive Christianity are scanty, and that, *for what we know*, what is not extant, had it survived, would have told a different tale. But granting this, the hypothesis that history *might* contain facts which it does not contain, is no positive evidence for the truth of those facts; and this is the question, what is the *positive* evidence that the Church ever believed or taught a Gospel substantially different from that which her extant documents contain? All the evidence that is extant, be it much or be it little, is on our side: Protestants have none. Is none better than some? Scarcity of records—granting for argument's sake there is scarcity—may be taken to account for Protestants having no

evidence; it will not account for our having all that is to be had; it cannot become a positive evidence in their behalf. That records are few does not show that they are worthless.

Whether, however, there be a scarcity of primitive documents or not, I consider that, supposing the appeal to facts be allowed at all, not only there is none for them, but there is enough for us. But the advocates of Protestantism do *not* allow the appeal; they aver that the Apostolic system of the Church was certainly lost, when they know not, how they know not, without assignable instruments, but by a great revolution,—of *that* they are certain; and then they challenge us to prove it was not so. "Prove," they say, "if you can, that the real and very truth is not so entirely hid in primitive history, as to leave not a particle of evidence betraying it. This is the very thing which misleads you, that all the arguments are in your favour. Is it not *possible* that an error has got the place of the truth, and has destroyed all the evidence but what witnesses on its side? Is it not possible that all the Churches should everywhere have given up and stifled the scheme of doctrine they received from the Apostles, and have substituted another for it? Of course it is; it is plain to common sense it may be so. Well, we say, what *may be, is;* this is our great principle: we say that the Apostles considered episcopacy an indifferent matter, though Ignatius says it is essential. We say that the table is not an altar, though Ignatius says it is. We say there is no priest's office under the Gospel, though Clement affirms it. We say that baptism is not an

enlightening, though Justin takes it for granted. We say that heresy is a misfortune, though Ignatius accounts it a deadly sin; and all this, because it is our right, and our duty, to interpret Scripture in our own way. We uphold the pure unmutilated Scripture; the Bible, and Bible only, is the religion of Protestants; the Bible and our own sense of the Bible. We claim a sort of parliamentary privilege to interpret laws our own way, and not to suffer an appeal to any court beyond ourselves. We know, and we view it with consternation, that all antiquity runs counter to our interpretation; and therefore, alas, the Church was corrupt from *very* early times indeed. But mind, we hold all this in a truly Catholic spirit, not in bigotry. We allow in others the right of private judgment, and confess that we, as others, are fallible men. We confess facts are against us; we do but claim the liberty of theorising in spite of them. Far be it from us to say, that we are certainly right; we only say, that the whole early Church was certainly wrong. We do not impose our belief on any one; we only say, that those who take the contrary side are Papists, firebrands, persecutors, madmen, zealots, bigots, and an insult to the nineteenth century."

To such an argument, I am aware, it avails little to oppose historical evidence, of whatever kind. It sets out by protesting against all evidence, however early and consistent, as the testimony of fallible men; yet at least, the *imagination* is affected by an array of facts; and I am not unwilling to appeal to the imagination of those who refuse to let me address their reason. With this view I have been inquiring

into certain early works, unpopular either in their day or afterwards, to see if any vestige of the hypothetical system in question can be discovered there; for as to the body of orthodox Fathers, it is pretty well acknowledged that there is nothing Protestant in them. With this object, then, I have been discussing the Canons called Apostolical.

The especial circumstance which recommends these Canons to our notice is this; that they contain what there is reason to consider a fair portrait of the customs and opinions of the ante-Nicene Church. This judgment about them, which depends on historical evidence, is confirmed by the two following considerations: the Canons in question were in a great measure neglected, or at least superseded in the Church, after Constantine's day, especially in the West. Let this be recollected by those who dwell upon the corruptions which they suppose resulted from the Church's establishment by Constantine, Rome being the fountain-head. Further, there is ground, weak or strong, for suspecting that the *collection* or *edition* of Canons, as we have it, was made by heretics—probably Arians—though they have not meddled with the contents of them. Thus, while the neglect of later times separates these Canons from Romanism, the assent of the Arians, if so, is a second witness, in addition to the judgment and practice of the early Church, in proof of their Apostolical origin. The first ages observe them; even heretics respect them; later and corrupt ages neglect them. Now, the argument to be derived from these Canons, in behalf of the Catholic system, is twofold: first, from what they *assume;* secondly,

from what they *enjoin*. I shall set down some points of detail under each of these heads.

1. First, as to what is implied in the Canons, as if an existing system on which they are built. Let it be observed, they do but contain directions as to particular matters; they do not begin a religion; they do not form a Church; nor are they reformations; they presuppose something existing, recognise it, and carry on its principles into their minute applications or developments. They are but *ecclesiastical* appointments, and assume *Apostolical* appointments as their basis. Here, then, an argument arises in favour of what they assume, for the very reason that they do assume it. That they do not enjoin, but assume it, is not only a stronger evidence of its existence, but even of its importance. It is but a common remark, that indirect notice of facts and events in an historical document is a stronger evidence that they existed, or took place, than direct. But, over and above this, such implication is, in the present case, a stronger evidence also of the authority and moment of the points assumed. For Canons themselves are enacted on the authority of the *Church*; what they assume as principles, and, instead of touching, only attempt to carry out, may seem to depend on an authority higher than the Church, which the Church cannot touch, and to come from the Apostles. This distinction has already been noticed, and is very obvious. For instance, we are accustomed to place the Sacraments among the Divine and Apostolical ordinances which Christ gave, and Christ only can annul; among ecclesiastical, the subordinate rites connected with

them, the particular prayers, and the provision about sponsors. Among Divine and Apostolical ordinances, we place the Lord's-day festival; among Ecclesiastical, are Saints' days. Among the Divine, are a number of, more or less, abstract or (what may be called) disembodied rites, to which the Church gives a substance and form—such as public worship, imposition of hands, benedictions, and the sign of the cross, which are first elements of actual ordinances, and the instrumental principles of grace, and are variously applied and dispensed according to the decision of the Church. Hence arise orders of service, the rites of confirmation, absolution, marriage, and the like, which are of a mixed nature, ecclesiastical in form, divine and life-giving in their principle. Now, then, let us see what these observances are, *on which* the canons build their system, and we shall have some insight into what were considered Apostolical at the time these Canons were framed.

They are such as these: the Canons take for granted the principle of ministerial superintendence, and the principle of ministerial succession, and consider them both vested in one and the same individual functionary. They take for granted that ordination is necessary, and that it is given by imposition of hands. They presuppose the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons. They take for granted the one baptism for the remission of sins. They assume that there is an altar and a sacrifice in the visible Church under the Gospel, and that by "the Lord's appointment." They take for granted the rite of holy communion. They take for granted the practice of excommunication. They speak of heretics, or sectarians, and

of their being in a state of serious disadvantage; they use concerning them the same (what is now called) fierce and contemptuous language which occurs in later centuries. They take for granted a local and diocesan episcopacy. They take for granted an order of precedence among the bishops of each nation. They take for granted that councils are composed of bishops. They take for granted that men who have married may be clergy—nay, may be bishops. They recognise the observances of celibacy and fasting. They recognise the fast of the great Sabbath, or Easter-eve, and of Lent, and of Wednesday and Friday. They imply the observance of Easter; they imply the existence of festival days. They recognise the use of churches; and of wax, and of oil, gold and silver vessels, and linen, in the worship of God, and these as consecrated. They speak of demoniacal possession and exorcism.

These are the usages and the points of discipline which these Canons recognise as established. As to doctrine, besides the sacred truths of the Trinity and Atonement, which are incidentally mentioned, there are the following:—that the Church may not inflict corporal punishments; that to pay for preferment is simony; that unanimity is a chief duty of Christians; that on the bishop solely falls the cure of souls, and its responsibility; that those who serve the altar should live of the altar; that to acknowledge heretics is to associate Christ with Belial; that there is a difference, under the Gospel, between true priests and false priests; that baptism is the cross and death of the Lord; and that persons who fast on festivals fulfil the prophecy in the be-

ginning of the fourth chapter of St. Paul's first Epistle to Timothy.

2. So much on what these Canons *imply:* now, what do they *enjoin?* Here, however, I would observe, lest I should be mistaken, that I do not conceive that the injunctions contained in them have any *direct* binding force on us *as* Canons, but I take them as an historical evidence of the *sort* of religion which was in that age considered as included under the idea of Christianity. They will be found to breathe a certain spirit, very unlike what is now popular, and to be developments of principles which must be counted false, unless modern received principles are false instead. I shall set down some of them, without any great care to be systematic:—

It was provided, then, that every bishop should be consecrated by two or three bishops, and the inferior orders always by a bishop; that no bishop, priest, or deacon, should take on him secular cares; that, unless under very extraordinary circumstances and with leave from his brethren, a bishop should not move from see to see; that he should not admit into his diocese the clergy of another; that he should not ordain out of his diocese; that neither bishop, priest, nor deacon might put away his wife on pretext of religion; that a person who married a second time after baptism should not hold any office in the ministry, nor one who had married two sisters or a niece; that a cleric should not become surety; that neither bishop, priest, nor deacon, might take interest of money; that clergy who had entered the sacred pale single might marry, provided they were only readers or chanters; that no secular influence should interfere with appointment

of bishops; that letters of introduction should be required of foreign ecclesiastics; that no suffragan could act in extra-diocesan matters without his metropolitan, nor the metropolitan without his suffragans; that councils should be held twice a year for doctrine and settlement of disputes; that the bishop should have the oversight of all church property, but might not give to his relatives, who, if poor, were to receive the alms of the poor,—nor to himself, unless for his necessary maintenance and that of brethren who were his guests; that the inferior clergy might not move without him; and that a distinction should be preserved between the Church property and his private property, the latter of which he might bequeath to wife, children, relatives, and servants, as he would.

Moreover, these Canons enjoin that no bishop, priest, or deacon, might join in prayer with sectaries [1], much less allow them to perform any ministerial acts; or acknowledge their baptism, sacrifice, or ordination; or re-baptize, or re-ordain, or be re-ordained, or neglect trine immersion, or refuse to restore a penitent; or allow the forged scriptures of the sectaries to be read in church; or ridicule the maim, deaf, blind, or lame; or eat flesh with the blood; or fast on Sundays, or on Saturdays [2], except Easter eve; or not fast in Lent, and on Wednesday and Fridays, except on account of bodily weakness; or enter a sectarian meeting or synagogue to pray, whether cleric

[1] αἱρετικοῖς.

[2] Mr. James, in the notes on his Four Sermons preached before the University of Oxford, has given weighty reasons for doubting the antiquity of the Saturday Feast; this is not the place, however, for discussing the subject.

or layman; or apply to common uses consecrated vessels or linen; that such bodily infirmities, and such only, should be a bar to ordination as interfered with ministerial usefulness; that kings and civil magistrates should not be insulted; and household slaves not ordained without the leave of their masters and the grant of freedom.

Now let us picture to ourselves the irksome position of a modern Protestant in a communion where such points were first principles; with his societies instead of the Church—his committees, boards, and platforms, instead of bishops—his Record or Patriot newspaper instead of councils—his "concerts for prayer" instead of anathemas on heretics and sectaries—his harangues at public meetings instead of exorcisms—his fourths of October instead of festival days—his glorious memories instead of holy commemorations—his cheap religion instead of gold and silver vessels—his gas and stoves for wax and oil—and his denunciations of self-righteousness for fasting and celibacy. Can there be any doubt that such Canons imply altogether a different notion of Christianity from that which he has been accustomed to entertain? *This*, indeed, would be the very fault he would find with the whole system,—he would say he was not at home in it, or, that there is nothing evangelical in such ecclesiastical regulations; and yet after all, there is quite as much surely as in the rules laid down by St. Paul, as in the fifth, or seventh, or eleventh and twelfth, or fourteenth chapters of his first epistle to the Corinthians; the ninth chapter of his second; or the fourth and fifth of his first to Timothy. I do not mean to allow that the essential

Gospel doctrines are absent from the Canons, which no one will say who has studied them. But even if they were, such absence is not in point, unless it is a proof that rulers of the Church do not hold doctrines, because they *also* give rules of discipline, and, when giving the latter, do not deliver the former instead. Certain doctrines may be true, and certain ordinances also; the one may be prescribed in Canons, the other taught in Confessions. It does not follow that those who enforce the one do not enforce the other; but it does follow that those who enforce the latter to the exclusion of the former, do not enforce both. Those who enforce the discipline, need not deny the doctrine; but those who think to escape the discipline by professing the doctrine, are more careful of doctrine than the early Church was, and have no congeniality of feeling with times which considered it better to follow out what they had received, than to reason against it, "to do these, and not leave the other undone."

Such, then, is a sketch of the main rules of discipline in the primitive Church, as they have come down to us, and which I offer for those whom it may concern. They show clearly enough the sort of religion which was then considered Apostolic; not that which *we* should term the "free-and-easy" religion, but what our opponents would call the "formal and superstitious."

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANTONY IN CONFLICT.

"He found him in a desert land, and in the waste howling wilderness; He led him about, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. He made him ride on the high places of the earth, that he might eat the increase of the fields; and He made him to suck honey out of the rock, and oil out of the flinty rock."

It is a great mistake to suppose we need quit our temporal calling, and go into retirement, in order to serve God acceptably. Christianity is a religion for this world, for the busy and influential, for the rich and powerful, as well as for the poor. A writer of the age of Justin Martyr expresses this clearly and elegantly:—

"Christians differ not," he says, "from other men, in country, or language, or customs. They do not live in any certain cities, or employ any particular dialect, or cultivate peculiar habits of life. They dwell in cities, Greek and barbarian, each where he finds himself placed; and while they submit to the fashion of their country in dress and food, and the general conduct of life, they yet maintain a system of interior polity, which, beyond all controversy, is admirable and strange. The countries they inhabit are their own, but they dwell like aliens. They marry, like other men, and do not exclude their children from

their affections; their table is open to all around them; they live in the flesh, but not according to the flesh; they walk on earth, but their conversation is in heaven."—*Ad Diogn.* 5.

Yet, undeniable as it is, that there is never an obligation upon Christians to leave, and often an obligation against leaving, their worldly engagements and possessions, still it is as undeniable that such an abandonment is often allowable, and when allowable praiseworthy. Our Saviour expressly told one, who was rich and young, "to sell all and give to the poor;" and surely He does not speak in order to immortalize exceptions, or extreme cases, or fugitive forms of argument, refutation, or censure. Even looking at the subject in a merely human light, one may pronounce it to be a narrow and shallow system, that same Protestantism, which forbids all the higher and more noble impulses of the mind, and forces men to eat, drink, and be merry, whether they will or no. But the mind of true Catholic Christianity is expansive enough to admit high and low, rich and poor, one with another.

If the primitive Christians are to be trusted as witnesses of the genius of the Gospel system, certainly it is of that elastic and comprehensive character which removes the more powerful temptations to schism, by giving, as far as possible, a sort of indulgence to the feelings and motives which lead to it, correcting them the while, purifying them, and reining them in, ere they get excessive. Thus, whereas the reason naturally loves to expatiate at will through all things known and unknown, true catholicism does not, like the schools of human masters, place us within

a strict and rigid creed, extending to the very minutest details of thought, so that a man can never have an opinion of his own; yet, while its creed is short and simple, and it is cautious and gentle in its decisions, and distinguishes between things necessary and things pious to believe, between wilfulness and ignorance, still it asserts the supremacy of faith, the guilt of unbelief, and the duty of deference to the Church; so that reason is brought round against and subdued to the obedience of Christ, at the very time when it seems to be launching forth without chart upon the ocean of speculation. It opposes the intolerance of what are called "*sensible* Protestants," as much as that of Romanists. It is shocked at the tyranny of those who will not let a man do anything out of the way without stamping him with the name of a fanatic. It deals softly with the ardent and impetuous, saying, in effect—"My child, you may do as many great things as you will; but I have already made a list for you to select from. You are too docile to pursue ends merely because they are of your own choosing; you seek them because they are *great*. You wish to live above the common course of a Christian;—I can teach you to do this, yet without arrogance." Meanwhile the sensible Protestant keeps to his point, urging every one to be as every one else, and moulding all minds upon his one small model; and when he has made his ground good to his own admiration, he finds after all that half his charge have turned schismatics, by way of searching for something divine and extraordinary.

These remarks are intended as introductory to some notice of the life of St. Antony, the first hermit,

whom I had occasion to notice in a former chapter. A hermit's life, indeed—that is, a strictly monastic or solitary life—may be called unnatural, and is not sanctioned by the Gospel. Christ sent His apostles by two and two; and surely He knew what was in man from the day that He said—"It is not good for him to be alone." So far, then, Antony's manner of life may be said to have no claim upon our admiration, unless it was the suggestion of some extraordinary providence; but this part of his pattern did not extend to his imitators, who by their numbers were soon led to the formation of monastic societies, and who, after a while, entangled even Antony himself in the tie of becoming in a certain sense their religious head and teacher. Monachism consisting, not in solitariness, but in austerities, prayers, retirement, and obedience, had nothing in it, so far, but what was perfectly Christian, and, under circumstances, exemplary; especially when viewed in its connexion with the relative duties, which were soon afterwards appropriated to it, of being almoner of the poor, educating the clergy, and defending the faith as delivered to us. In short, Monachism became, in a little while, nothing else than a peculiar department of the Christian ministry—a ministry not of the sacraments, or clerical, but especially of the word and doctrine; not indeed by any formal ordination to it, for it was as yet a lay profession, but by the common right, or rather duty, which attaches to all of us to avow, propagate, and defend the truth, especially when our devotion to it has the countenance and encouragement of Church authorities.

St. Antony's life, written by his friend the great

Athanasius, has come down to us. Some critics, indeed, doubt its genuineness, or consider it interpolated. Rivetus and others reject it; Du Pin decides, on the whole, that it is his, but with additions; the Benedictines and Tillemont ascribe it to him unhesitatingly. I conceive no question can be raised with justice about its *substantial* integrity; and on rising from the perusal of it, we are able to pronounce Antony an extraordinary man. Enthusiastic he certainly must be accounted; had he lived in this day and this country, he would have been exposed to a considerable (though, of course, not insuperable) temptation to become a sectarian. Panting after some higher rule of life than that which the ordinary forms of society admit of, and finding our present lines too rigidly drawn to include any style of mind that is out of the way, any rule that is not "gentlemanlike," "comfortable," and "established," he might possibly have broken what he could not bend. The question is not whether he would have been justified in so doing (of course not); nor whether the most angelic temper of all is not that which settles down contented with what is every-day (as Abraham's heavenly guests ate of the calf which he had dressed, and as our Saviour went down to Nazareth, and was subject to His parents); but whether such resignation to worldly comforts is not quite as often, at least, the characteristic of a very grovelling mind also;—whether there are not minds between the lowest and the highest, of ardent feelings, keen imaginations, and undisciplined tempers, who are under a strong irritation prompting them to run wild,—whether

it is not our duty (so to speak) to play with such, carefully letting out line enough lest they snap it,—and whether our established system is as indulgent and as wise as is desirable in its treatment of such persons, inasmuch as it provides no occupation for them, does not understand how to turn them to account, lets them run to waste, tempts them to schism, loses them, and is weakened by the loss. For instance, had we some regular Missionary Seminary, such an institution would in one way supply the deficiency I speak of.

But to return to Antony. Did I see him before me, I might be tempted to consider him somewhat of an enthusiast; but what I desire to point out to the reader is the subdued and Christian form which his enthusiasm took; it was not vulgar, bustling, imbecile, unstable, undutiful; it was calm and composed, manly, intrepid, magnanimous, full of affectionate loyalty to the Church and to the Truth.

Antony was born A.D. 251, while Origen was still alive, while Cyprian was bishop of Carthage, Dionysius bishop of Alexandria, and Gregory Thaumaturgus of Neocæsarea; he lived till A.D. 356, to the age of 105, nine years after the birth of St. Chrysostom, and two years after that of St. Augustine. He was an Egyptian by birth, and the son of noble, opulent, and Christian parents. He was brought up as a Christian, and, from his boyhood, showed a strong disposition towards a solitary life. Shrinking from the society of his equals, and despising the external world in comparison of the world within him, he set himself against what is considered a liberal education—that is, the acquisition of foreign languages.

At the same time he was very dutiful to his parents, simple and self-denying in his habits, and attentive to the sacred services and readings of the Church.

Before he arrived at man's estate, he had lost both his parents, and was left with a sister, who was a child, and an ample inheritance. His mind, at this time, was earnestly set upon imitating the Apostles and their converts, who gave up their possessions and followed Christ. One day, about six months after his parents' death, as he went to church, as usual, the subject pressed seriously upon him. The Gospel of the day happened to contain the text—"If thou wilt be perfect, go sell all that thou hast," &c. Antony applied it to himself, and acted upon it. He had three hundred acres [1], of especial fertility, even in Egypt; these he at once made over to the uses of the poor of his own neighbourhood. Next, he turned into money all his personal property, and reserving a portion for his sister's use, gave the rest to the poor. After awhile he was struck by hearing in church the text—"Take no thought for the morrow;" and considering he had not yet fully satisfied the Evangelical precept, he gave away what he had reserved, placing his sister in the care of some trustworthy female acquaintances, who had devoted themselves to a single life.

He commenced his ascetic life, according to the custom hitherto observed, by retiring to a place not far from his own home. Here he remained for awhile to steady and fix his mind in his new habits, and to gain what advice he could towards the forma-

[1] *Arura*—three quarters of an English acre.—*Gibbon.*

tion of them, from such as had already engaged in the like. This is a remarkable trait, as Athanasius records it, as showing how little he was influenced by self-will or sectarian spirit in what he was doing, how ardently he pursued an ascetic life as in itself good, and how willing he was to become the servant of any who might give him directions in his pursuit. But this will be best shown by an extract:—

"There was, in the next village, an aged man who had lived a solitary life from his youth. Antony, seeing him, 'was zealously affected in a good matter,' and first of all adopted a similar retirement in the neighbourhood of the village. And did he hear of any zealous man anywhere, he used to go and seek him out, like a wise man; not returning home till he had seen him, and gained from him some stock, as it were, for his journey towards holiness. He laboured with his hands, according to the words—'If any one is without work, let him not eat;' laying out part of his produce in bread, part on the poor. He prayed continually, having learned that it is a duty to pray in private without ceasing. So attentive, indeed, was he to sacred reading, that he let no part of the Scripture fall from him to the ground, but retained all, memory serving in place of book. In this way he gained the affections of all; he, in turn, subjecting himself sincerely to the zealous men whom he visited, and marking down, in his own thoughts, the special attainment of each in zeal, and ascetic life—the refined manners of one, another's continuance in prayer, the meekness of a third, the kindness of a fourth, the long vigils of a fifth, the studiousness of a sixth. This had a marvellous gift of endurance, that of fasting

and sleeping on the ground; this was gentle, that long-suffering; and in one and all he noted the adoration of Christ, and love one towards another. Thus furnished, he returned to his own ascetic retreat, henceforth combining in himself their separate exercises, and zealously minded to exemplify them all. This, indeed, was his only point of emulation with those of his own age, that he might not come off second to them in good things; and this he so pursued as to annoy no one, rather to make all take delight in him. Accordingly, all the villagers of the place, and religious persons who were acquainted with him, seeing him such, called him God's beloved, and cherished him as a son or as a brother."—§ 4.

Of course this account is the mere relation of a fact; but, over and above its historical character, it evidently is meant as the description of a character which both the writer and those for whom he wrote thought eminently Christian. Taking it then as being, in a certain line, the *beau idéal* of what we should call the enthusiasm of the time, I would request the reader to compare it with the sort of Christianity into which the unhappy enthusiast of the present day is precipitated by the influences of sectarianism; and he will see how much was gained to Christianity, in purity, as well as unity, by that monastic system, the place of which among ourselves is filled by methodism and dissent.

After awhile, our youth's enthusiasm began to take its usual course. His spirits fell, his courage flagged; a reaction followed, and the temptations of this world assaulted him with a violence which

showed that as yet he scarcely understood the true meaning of his profession. Had he been nothing more than an enthusiast, he would have gone back to the world. His abandoned property, the guardianship of his sister, his family connexions, the conveniences of wealth, worldly reputation, disgust of the sameness and coarseness of his food, bodily infirmity, the tediousness of his mode of living, and the painfulness of idleness, became instruments of temptation. Other and fiercer assaults arose. However, his faith rose above them all, or rather, as Athanasius says, "not himself, but the grace of God that was in him." His biographer proceeds:—

"Such was Antony's first victory over the devil, or rather the Saviour's glorious achievement in him, 'who hath condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law may be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.' Not, however, as if Antony, imagining the devil was subdued, was neglectful afterwards, and secure; knowing from the Scriptures that there are many devices of the enemy, he was persevering in his ascetic life. He was the more earnest in keeping under his body, and bringing it into subjection, lest, triumphing in some things, yet in others he might be brought low. His vigils were often through the whole night. He ate but once in the day, after sunset; sometimes after two days, often after four: his food was bread and salt,—his drink, water only. He never had more than a mat to sleep on, but generally lay down on the ground. He put aside oil for anointing, saying that the youthful ought to be forward in their asceticism, and, instead of seeking what might relax the

body, to accustom it to hardships, remembering the Apostle's words—'When I am weak, then am I strong.' He thought it unsuitable to measure either holy living, or retirement for the sake of it, by length of time; but by the earnest desire and deliberate resolve of being holy. Accordingly, he never himself used to take any account of the time gone by; but, day by day, as if ever fresh beginning his exercise, he made still greater efforts to advance, repeating to himself continually the saying of the Apostle, 'forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forward to those which are before.'"—§ 7.

Such was his life for about fifteen years. At the end of this time, being now thirty-five, he betook himself to the desert, having first spent some days in prayers and holy exercises in the tombs. Here, however, we are necessarily introduced to another subject, which has already entered into Athanasius's text, though it has not been necessary to notice it,—his alleged conflicts with the evil spirits; to it, then, let us proceed.

It is quite certain, then, that Antony believed himself to be subjected to sensible and visible conflicts with evil spirits. It is far from my desire to rescue him from the imputation of enthusiasm; the very drift of my account of him being to show how enthusiasm is sobered and refined by being submitted to the discipline of the Church, instead of being allowed to run wild externally to it. If he were not an enthusiast, or in danger of being such, we should lose one chief instruction his life conveys. This admission, however, does not settle the question to which the narrative of his spiritual conflicts gives

rise ; so I shall first make some extracts descriptive of them, and then comment upon them.

The following is the account of his visit to the tombs :—

" Thus bracing himself after the pattern of Elias, he set off to the tombs which were some distance from his village ; and giving directions to an acquaintance to bring him bread after some days' interval, he entered into one of them, suffered himself to be shut in, and remained there by himself. This the enemy not enduring, yea, rather dreading, lest before long he should engross the desert also with his holy exercise, assaulted him one night with a host of spirits, and so lashed him, that he lay speechless on the ground from the torture, which, he declared, was far more severe than from strokes which man could inflict. But, by God's Providence, who does not overlook those who hope in Him, on the next day his acquaintance came with the bread ; and, on opening the door, saw him lying on the ground as if dead. Whereupon he carried him to the village church, and laid him on the ground ; and many of his relations and the villagers took their places by the body, as if he were already dead. However, about midnight his senses returned, and collecting himself, he observed that they were all asleep except his aforesaid acquaintance ; whereupon, he beckoned him to his side, and asked of him, without waking any of them, to carry him back again to the tombs.

" The man took him back : and when he was shut in, as before, by himself, being unable to stand from his wounds, he lay down and began to pray. Then he cried out loudly, ' Here am I, Antony ; I do not

shun your blows. Though ye add to them, yet nothing shall separate me from the love of Christ.' And then he began to sing, 'Though a host should encamp against me, yet shall not my heart be afraid.' The devil has no trouble in devising diverse shapes of evil. During the night, therefore, the evil ones made so great a tumult, that the whole place seemed to be shaken, and, as if they broke down the four walls of the building, they seemed to rush in, in the form of wild beasts and reptiles. . . . . But Antony, though scourged and pierced, felt indeed his bodily pain, but the rather kept vigil in his soul. So, as he lay groaning in body, yet a watcher in his mind, he spoke in taunt—'Had ye any power, one of you would be enough to assail me; you try, if possible, to frighten me with your number, because the Lord has spoiled you of your strength. Those pretended forms are the proof of your impotence. Our seal and wall of defence is faith in our Lord.' After many attempts, then, they gnashed their teeth at him, because they were rather making themselves a sport than him. But the Lord a second time remembered the conflict of Antony, and came to his help. Raising his eyes, he saw the roof as if opening, and a beam of light descending towards him; suddenly the devils vanished, his pain ceased, and the building was whole again. Upon this Antony said, 'Where art thou, Lord? why didst thou not appear at the first, to ease my pain?' A voice answered, 'Antony, I was here, but waited to see thy bearing in the contest; since, then, thou hast sustained and not been worsted, I will be to thee an aid

for ever, and will make thy name famous in every place.' "—§ 9, 10.

After this preliminary vigil, Antony made for the desert, where he spent the next twenty years in solitude. Athanasius gives the following account of his life there:—

"The following day he left the tombs, and his piety becoming still more eager, he went to the old man before mentioned, and prayed him to accompany him into the desert. When he declined by reason of his age and the novelty of the proposal, he set off for the mountain by himself . . . . and finding beyond the river a fortified spot, deserted so long a while that venomous reptiles abounded there, he went thither, and took possession of it, they farther retreating, as if one pursued them. Blocking up the entrance, and laying in bread for six months (as the Thebans are wont, often keeping their bread a whole year), and having a well of water indoors, he remained, as if in a shrine, neither going abroad himself, nor seeing any of those who came to him. . . . He did not allow his acquaintance to enter; so, while they remained often days and nights without, they used to hear noises within; blows, pitiable cries, such as 'Depart from our realm! what part hast thou in the desert? thou shalt perforce yield to our devices.' At first they thought he was in dispute with some men who had entered by means of ladders; but when they had contrived to peep in through a chink, and saw no one, then they reckoned it was devils that they heard, and, in terror, called Antony. He cared for them more than for the spirits, and coming at

once near the door, bade them go away and not fear; 'for,' he said, 'the devils make all this feint to alarm the timid.' Ye, then, sign yourselves, and depart in confidence, and let them mock their ownselves."—§ 12, 13.

To enter into the state of opinion and feeling which such accounts imply, it is necessary to observe, that as regards the Church's warfare with the devil, the primitive Christians considered themselves to be similarly circumstanced with the Apostles. They did not draw a line between the condition of the Church in their day and in the first age, but believed that what it had been, such it was still in its trials and in its powers; that the open assaults of Satan, and their own means of repelling them, were such as they are described in the Gospels. Exorcism was a sacred function in the primitive Church, and the energumen took his place with catechumens and penitents, as in the number of those who had the especial prayers, and were allowed some of the privileges, of the Christian body. Our Saviour speaks of the power of exorcising as depending on fasting and prayer, in certain special cases, and thus seems to countenance the notion of a direct conflict between the Christian athlete and the powers of evil, a conflict carried on, on the side of the former, by definite weapons, for definite ends, and not that indirect warfare merely which the religious conduct of life implies. "This kind can come forth by nothing but by prayer and fasting." Surely none of Christ's words are chance words; He spoke *with a purpose*, and the Holy Spirit guided the Evangelists in their selection of them *with a purpose;* and if so, this text

is a rule and an admonition, and was acted upon as such by the primitive Christians, whether from their received principles of interpretation or the traditionary practice of the Church.

In like manner, whether from their mode of interpreting Scripture, or from the opinions and practices which came down to them, they conceived the devil to have that power over certain brute animals which Scripture sometimes assigns to him. He is known on one memorable occasion to have taken the form of a serpent; at another time, a legion of devils possessed a herd of swine. These instances may, for what we know, be revealed *specimens* of a whole side of the Divine dispensation, viz., the interference of spiritual agencies, good and bad, with the course of the world, under which, perhaps, the speaking of Balaam's ass falls; and the early Christians, whether so understanding Scripture, or from their traditionary system, acted as if they were so. They considered that brute nature was widely subjected to the power of spirits; as, on the other hand, there had been a time when even the Creator Spirit had condescended to manifest Himself in the bodily form of a dove. Their notions concerning local demoniacal influences in oracles and idols, in which they were sanctioned by Scripture, confirmed this belief. Accordingly, they took passages like the following literally, and used them as a corroborative proof:—"Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy." "They shall take up serpents, and if they drink any deadly thing it shall not hurt them." "Your adversary, the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he

may devour." "I saw three unclean spirits, like frogs . . . . they are the spirits of devils, working miracles." Add to these, Dan. vii. 3, 4, about the four beasts; Isa. xiii. 21, 22, about satyrs or jackals; and Job xli., about the leviathan, which they interpreted of the evil spirit.

Moreover, there is a ground of deep philosophy on which such notions may be based, and which appears to have been held by the primitive Christians; viz., that visible things are types and earnests of things invisible. The elements are, in some sense, symbols and tokens of spiritual agents, good and bad. Satan is called the prince of the power of the air. Still more mysterious than inanimate nature is the family of brute animals, the real intelligence of which, if they have no souls, is a supernatural something which makes use of their outward forms as its organs and instruments. If, on the other hand, they have souls, it is natural to attribute to them a moral nature, and a place, however subordinate, in the great conflict which is going on between good and evil. As to the exact connexion between the visible and invisible, the when, where, how, and how far, this it is doubtless idle to attempt to settle; but surely there is nothing abstractedly absurd in considering certain hideous developments of nature as tokens of the presence of the unseen principle of evil, when we once admit that it exists. Certainly the sight of a beast of prey, with his malevolent passions, savage cruelty, implacable rage, malice, cunning, sullenness, restlessness, brute hunger, irresistible strength, awakens very awful and complicated musings in a religious mind. Here, then, a philosophical view of nature would be

considered, in primitive times, to corroborate the method of Scripture interpretation then adopted.

But, moreover, Scripture itself seemed, in the parallel case of demoniacs, to become its own interpreter. It was notorious that in the Apostolic age devils made human beings their organs; why, then, much more, should not brute beasts be such? The simple question was, whether the state of things in the third century was substantially the same as it was in the first; and this, I say, the early Christians *assumed* in the affirmative, and certainly, whether they were judges of this question or not, I suppose they were as good judges as we are. The case of demoniacs should be carefully considered, since their sufferings often seem to have been neither more nor less than what would now be attributed to natural diseases, and might be treated (and rightly, nay, perhaps, successfully) by medical rules. We have no right to be sure that the demoniac whom the Apostles could not cure, might not have recovered under the remedies usually administered in epilepsy. Again, the woman who was bowed together for eighteen years, and was cured by Christ, is said to have had "a spirit of infirmity," to have been "bound by Satan." If, then, diseases may be tokens of demoniacal presence and power, though ordinarily admitting of medical treatment, why is it an objection to the connexion of the material or animal world with spirits, that the laws of mineral agents, or the peculiarities of brute natures can also be drawn out into system on paper, and counteracted or aided by our knowledge of them? The same objection lies, nay avails, against the one and the other. The very same scoffing

temper which rejects, *at once and in the mass*, the opinions of the early Church concerning Satan's power, as "Pagan," "Oriental," and the like, does actually assail the inspired statements respecting it, explains away demoniacal possessions as unreal, and maintains that Christ and His Apostles spoke by way of accommodation, and in the language of their day, when they said that Satan bound us with diseases and plagues, and was "prince of the power of the air."

Dreams are another department of our present state of being, through which, as Scripture informs us, the Supernatural seems to act; and in the same general way; i. e., not always, and by ascertainable rules, but by the virtue of indefinite, though real, connexion with them.

On the whole, then, the ancients seem to have considered all that is seen as but a type or instrument of what is unseen, as external indications, to us practically influential, of the Supernatural. This will explain what seems, at first sight, credulity and superstition in many great men. It is objected to them that they *mistook* what is natural for what is above nature; and it is condescendingly observed, that had they lived when "science" had made the advances which it has effected in these enlightened days, such men would not have been exposed to such errors. But, in truth, their theory, whether right or wrong, runs much deeper than we sciolists dream; for they take the *whole of nature*, not certain detached parts of it, to be something supernatural; and the critics in question do not advance one inch towards removing them from their position, by showing a cer-

tain *connexion* and *order* between various parts of nature which before seemed unconnected, and by using that connexion for certain present and temporal purposes. The plain astronomer speaks as if the sun went round the earth, the physical philosopher as if the earth went round the sun; this may be viewed as a question of practical convenience, the assumption of a theory or fiction necessary as an artifice for arriving at certain practical ends. On the other hand, it does not make the fire from heaven on Sodom less Divine because it came from a volcano; nor, in like manner, need a comet or eclipse be less a sign of tumult and change because it proceeds upon a certain physical law. It is another matter whether it *is* such a sign,—that is a question of *fact;* and to us mortals, who have a difficulty at arriving at facts, it may be a matter of greater or less probability, and of a probability which may be affected by the circumstance of the phenomenon harmonizing or not with the established order of things; but it is one which modern "discoveries" (as they are called) do not and cannot settle. And in like manner, since evil spirits are known before now to have entered into brute animals, it is a question of probabilities whether they do now,—whether certain passages in Scripture which seem to assert it, are, or are not, to be understood literally; and supposing I found a narrative, such as Antony's, of *the Apostles' age*, I must think it would be sufficiently agreeable to Scripture doctrine to make me dismiss from my mind all *antecedent* difficulties in believing it. On the other hand, did the miracle of the swine occur in the life of St. Antony, I venture to maintain that we of

this scientific day should not merely suspend our judgment, or pronounce it improbable (which we might have a right to do), but should at once, and peremptorily, pronounce it altogether incredible and false: so as to make it appear that,

> "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

What I have been saying comes to this, that there are a number of phenomena in the world, tokens of good and evil, which we may or may not, according as we please, refer to the presence and agency of invisible beings,—such as the course of nature, the accidents of life, the bearing upon us of brute animals, the phantoms which occur in dreams, the influences of the imagination, and the like. If we lived in an age of miracles, the (in that case) acknowledged presence of a supernatural power would lead us, doubtless, to refer many things to it, and reasonably, which otherwise we should have left as we found them; and in proportion as we come near in time or place to miraculous agency, in the same proportion will this persuasion affect us. When, then, we read of Antony's sensible contests with the powers of evil, the abstract probability of these is to be decided by the existence, in his day, of such parallel *facts* as demoniacal possessions, which certainly *are*, witnessed unanimously by his contemporaries; and the really superhuman character of what seem like natural occurrences is to be estimated, not by the mere circumstance that they may be brought under natural laws, as demoniacal possessions also may be by the physician, but by the known actual presence of unseen agents to which they may be referred. Antony's conflict in the tombs may be

solved into a dream, or into an attack from jackals; yet this only removes the real agent a step further back. Satan may still have been the real agent at the bottom, and have been discerned by Antony through the shadows of things sensible.

I have no wish to trifle, or argue subtilly. We are upon a very deep subject. This earth had been Satan's kingdom; Christ came to end his usurpation; but Satan retreated only inch by inch. The Church of Christ is hallowed ground, but external to it is still the kingdom of darkness. Many serious persons think that the evil powers have, even now, extraordinary powers there, whether through or beyond the order of nature. A venerable bishop, who had had to do with heathen lands, once told the writer of these pages, that he did not at all doubt, from his own experience, that Satan had power in them which he has not with us. Certainly there are strange stories among them of sorcerers and the like. Nay, how strange are the stories which only in half-heathen, or even Christian places, have come perhaps to our own knowledge! How unaccountable to him who has met with them are the sudden sounds, the footsteps, and the noises which he has heard in solitary places, or when in company with others!

These things being considered, I judge of Antony's life thus:—There may be enthusiasm here; there may be, at times, exaggerations and misconceptions of what, as they really happened, meant nothing. And still, it may be true that that conflict begun by our Lord, when He was interrogated and assaulted by Satan, was continued in the experience of Antony, who lived not so very long after Him. How far

the evil spirit acted, how far he was present in natural objects, how far was dream, how far fancy, is little to the purpose. I see, any how, the root of a great truth here, and think that those are wiser who admit something than those who deny all. I see Satan frightened at the invasions of the Church upon his kingdom; I see him dispossessed by fasting and prayer, as was predicted; and I see him retreating step by step; I see him doing his utmost in whatever way to resist. Nor is there anything uncongenial to the Gospel system, that so direct a war should be waged upon him; a war without the ordinary duties of life and of society for its subject-matter and instruments. The text already referred to is (as it were) a canon in sanction of it; our Saviour Himself was forty days in the wilderness; and St. Paul in prison, St. Peter at Joppa, and St. John at Patmos, show us that social duties may be providentially suspended under the Gospel, and a direct intercourse with the next world be imposed upon the Christian. And if so much be allowed, certainly there is nothing in Antony's life to make us suspicious of him personally. His doctrine was pure and unimpeachable; and his temper is high and heavenly,—without cowardice, without gloom, without formality, and without self-complacency. Superstition is abject and crouching, it is full of thoughts of guilt; it distrusts God, and dreads the powers of evil. Antony at least has nothing of this, being full of holy confidence, divine peace, cheerfulness, and valorousness, be he (as some men may judge) ever so much an enthusiast. But on this subject I shall say something in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX.

ANTONY IN CALM.

"The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them, and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose, and the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water; in the habitations of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes."

I HAVE said enough about St. Antony's history; let me now introduce the reader to his character, which I shall best do by setting before him some unconnected passages, as they occur in the narrative of his life.

It is remarkable that his attempts at curing diseases were not always successful; his prayers being, as ours may be, *experimental*, not, as in the case of the Apostles, immediately suggested by the same Power which was about openly to manifest Itself. I am not denying that there were then in the Church extraordinary and heavenly gifts; but, whatever they were, they were distinct from those peculiar powers which we technically call miraculous.

"He united in sympathy and prayer with those who were in suffering; and *often*, and in *many* cases, the Lord heard him. When heard, he did not boast; *when unsuccessful*, he did not murmur; but, under all

circumstances, he gave thanks himself to the Lord, and exhorted the sufferers to be patient, and be assured that their cure was out of the power of himself, and, indeed, of any man, and lay with God only, *who wrought when He would, and towards whom He chose.* The patients in consequence accepted *even the words* of the old man as a medicine, learning themselves not to despise the means, but rather to be patient, while those who were healed were instructed not to give thanks to Antony, but to God only."—§ 56.

This passage deserves notice also, as showing the unvarnished character of the narrative. Superstitious legends are not candid enough to admit such failures as are implied in it. The following is to the same purpose. He was asked to allow a paralytic female and her parents to visit him, with the hope of a cure, and he refused, on the ground that, if her life was to be preserved, her prayers might be efficacious without him.

"'Go,' he answered, 'and, *unless she be dead already*, you will find her cured. This happy event is not my doing, that she should come to me, a miserable man, to secure it; but the cure is of the Saviour, who shows mercy *in every place*, on those who call upon Him. *To her prayers*, then, the Lord has been gracious; to me is but revealed, by His lovingkindness, that He means to cure her where she is.'"—§ 58.

Antony held that faith had power with God for any work: and he took delight in contrasting the privilege of believing with that poor and barren measure of knowledge which sight and reason open on us at the utmost. He considered, contrariwise

to present notions, that the *consciousness* was no necessary *condition*, of being rational. I mean, it is the present opinion, that no one can be acting according to reason, unless he reflects on himself and recognizes his own rationality. A peasant, who cannot tell *why* he believes, is supposed to have no reason for believing. This is worth noticing, for it is parallel to many other dogmas into which a civilized age will be sure to fall. Antony, on the other hand, considered there was something great and noble in believing and acting on the Gospel, without asking for proof; making experiment of it, and being rewarded by the success of it. He put the arguments for belief, to speak paradoxically, *after*, not *before* believing—that is, he seems to have felt there was a divine spirit and power in Christianity such as irresistibly to commend it to religious and honest minds, coming home to the heart with the same conviction which any high moral precept carries with it, and leaving argumentation behind as comparatively useless, except by way of curiously investigating motives and reasons for the satisfaction of the philosophical analyst. Probably he would not have been at all disconcerted, even could it have been proved to him that his cures were the *natural* effect of imagination in the patient: accounting them as rewards to faith, any how, not as evidence to the reason. Perhaps this consideration will tend to solve Paley's difficulty, better than he does himself, why the early Fathers appeal so faintly and scantily to the argument from miracles. That argument is not ordinarily the actual mode by which the mind is subdued to the obedience of Christ.

Some philosophers came to discourse with him; he says to them,—

"'Since you prefer to insist upon words of proof, and being skilled in the science of it, would have us also refrain from worshipping God without a proof drawn out in words, tell me first, how is the knowledge of things in general, and especially of religion, exactly ascertained? Is it by a verbal proof, or through the operative power of faith? And which of the two will you put first?' They said, Faith, owning that it was exact knowledge. Then Antony rejoined, 'Well said, for faith results from a disposition of the soul; but dialectics are from the art of their contriver. They, then, who possess the operative power of faith, can supersede, nay, are but cumbered with proof in words; for what we comprehend by faith, you are merely endeavouring to arrive at by words, and sometimes cannot throw into words at all. Faith, then, which acts, is better and surer than your subtle syllogisms.'"—§ 77.

Again,—

"'We prove, not in the persuasive words of Gentile wisdom, as our Teacher says, but we persuade by faith, which vividly anticipates a process through words.'"—§ 80.

After curing some demoniacs with the sign of the cross, he adds,

"'Why wonder ye at this? It is not we who do it, but Christ, by means of those who believe on Him. Do ye too believe, and ye shall see that our religion lies not in some art of words, but in faith, which worketh by love towards Christ; which if ye attained, ye too would no longer seek for proofs drawn

out in language, but would account faith in Christ sufficient.'"—*Ibid.*

As Antony would not have been startled at his cures being set down to the power of imagination, so I conceive he would have also admitted his gift of prescience to be, not miraculous, but the result of deep and continued meditation, acute reflection, and that calmness and dispassionateness of mind which self-denying habits naturally create, aided, of course, by the special evangelical influences of the Spirit, which, in his age, were manifested far more fully than in our own.

He is far from boasting of his spiritual attainments:

"It is not right to glory in casting out devils, nor in curing diseases, nor to make much of him only who casts out devils, and to undervalue him who does not. On the contrary, study the ascetic life of this man and that, and either imitate and emulate or improve it. For to do miracles is not ours, but the Saviour's; wherefore He said to His disciples, 'Rejoice not that the devils are subject unto you,' &c. To those who take confidence, not in holiness but in miracles, and say, 'Lord, did we not cast out devils in Thy name?' He makes answer, 'Verily I say unto you, I know you not;' for the Lord does not acknowledge the ways of the ungodly. On the whole, then, we must pray for the gift of discerning spirits, that, as it is written, we may not believe every spirit."—§ 38.

In like manner he dissuades his hearers from seeking the gift of prophecy; in which he remarkably differs from heathen ascetics, such as the Neo-pla-

tonists, who considered a knowledge of the secret principles of nature the great reward of their austerities.

"What is the use of hearing beforehand from the evil ones what is to happen? Or, why be desirous of such knowledge, even though it be true? It does not make us better men; nor is it a token of religious excellence at all. None of us is judged for what he does not know, nor accounted happy for his learning and acquirements; but in each case the question is this, whether or not he has kept the faith, and honestly obeyed the commandments? Wherefore we must not account these great matters, nor live ascetically for the sake of them—viz. in order to know the future; but to please God by a good conversation. But if we are anxious at all to foresee what is to be, it is necessary to be pure in mind. Certainly, I believe that that soul, which is clean on every side, and established in its highest nature, becomes keen-sighted, and is able to see things more and further than the devils, having the Lord to reveal them to it. Such was Elisha's soul, which witnessed Gehazi's conduct, and discerned the heavenly hosts standing by it."—§ 34.

These extracts have incidentally furnished some evidence of the calmness, and, I may say, good sense of Antony—i. e. *granting* that his view of things is correct. I am aware that an objector would urge that this is the very peculiarity of madness, to reason correctly upon false premises; and that Antony in no way differs from many men, now-a-days, whom we consider unable to take care of themselves. Yet surely, in considering the evidence of the

divine mission of the Apostles, we do think it allowable to point out their judiciousness and composure of mind, though the same objection applies there. And considering how extravagant and capricious the conduct of enthusiasts commonly is, how rude their manners, how inconstant their resolutions, how variable their principles, it is certainly a recommendation to our solitary to find him so grave, manly, considerate and refined,—or, to speak familiarly, so gentlemanlike, in the true sense of that word. We see something of this in the account which Athanasius gives us of his personal appearance after his twenty years' seclusion, which has nothing of the emaciated character, or the uncouth expression, of one who had thrown himself out of the society of his fellow-men. I shall be obliged to make a long extract, if I begin; and yet I cannot help hoping that the reader will be pleased to read it.

"He had now spent nearly twenty years exercising himself thus by himself, neither going abroad nor being seen for any time by any one. But at this date, many longing to copy his ascetic life, and acquaintances coming and forcibly breaking down and driving in the door, Antony came forth as from some shrine, fully perfected in its mysteries, and instinct with God. This was his first appearance outside the enclosure, and those who had come to see him were struck with surprise at the little change his person had undergone, having neither a full habit, as being without exercise, nor the shrivelled character which betokens fasts and conflicts with the evil ones. He was the same as they had known him before his retreat. His mind also was serene,

neither narrowed by sadness nor relaxed by indulgence, neither over-merry nor melancholy. He showed no confusion at the sight of the multitude, no elation at their respectful greetings. The Lord gave him grace in speech, so that he comforted many who were in sorrow, and reconciled those who were at variance, adding in every case, that they ought to set nothing of this world before love towards Christ. And while he conversed with the people, and exhorted them to remember the bliss to come, and God's lovingkindness to us men in not sparing His own Son, but giving Him up for us all, he persuaded many to choose the monastic life. And from that time monasteries have been raised among the mountains, and the desert is made a city by monks leaving their all and enrolling themselves in the heavenly citizenship.

"One day, going forth, when all the monks were collected about him, and begged him to discourse to them, he spoke as follows, in the Egyptian language:—

"Holy Scripture is sufficient for teaching, yet it is good to exhort one another in the faith, and refresh one another with our discourses. You then, as children, bring hither to your father whatever you have learned; and I in turn, as being your elder, will now impart to you what I know and what I have experienced. Let this pre-eminently be the common purpose of every one of you, not to give in when once you have begun, not to faint in your toil, not to say, 'We have been long enough at these exercises.' Rather as though, day after day, we were beginning for the first time, let our zeal grow

stronger; for even the whole of human life is very short compared with eternity, or rather nothing. And every thing in this world has its price, and you get but an equivalent; yet the promise of everlasting life is bought at a trifling purchase. 'The days of our life are threescore years and ten,' as Scripture says, 'and, if men be so strong, fourscore;' yet did we persist in our exercises for the whole fourscore, or for a hundred, this would not be the measure of our reign in glory. Instead of a hundred years, we shall reign for ages upon ages; not upon this poor earth on which is our struggle, but our promised inheritance is in heaven. We lose a corruptible body to receive it back incorruptible.

"Wherefore, my children, let us not weary, nor think we have been a long while toiling, or that we are doing any great thing; for our present sufferings are not to be compared to the glory which shall be revealed towards us. Let us not look at the world, or reckon we have made great sacrifices, for even the whole earth is but a small spot compared to the expanse of heaven. Though we had possessed it all, and had given it up all, it is nothing to the kingdom of heaven. It is no more than a man's making little of one copper coin in order to gain a hundred gold ones; thus he who is lord of the whole earth, and bids it farewell, does but give up little and gains a hundredfold. But if the whole earth be so little, what is it to leave a few acres? or a house? or a store of gold? Surely we should not boast or be dejected upon such a sacrifice. If we do not let them go for virtue's sake, on death at length we shall leave them, and often to whom we would not,

as says the Preacher. What gain is it to acquire what we cannot carry away with us? Far different are prudence, justice, temperance, fortitude, understanding, charity, love of the poor, faith towards Christ, gentleness, hospitality; obtain we these, and we shall find them there before us, making ready a dwelling for us in the country of the meek.

"Let us, then, apply ourselves to our religious exercise, and not be downcast. We have the Lord to work with us, as it is written. It is well to study the Apostle's saying, 'I die daily.' We shall not sin if we so live as to be dying daily; that is, if we rise as though we should not last till evening, and go to rest as though we should not rise; life being of an uncertain nature, doled out by Providence from day to day. Thus we shall be ever militant and looking forward for the day of judgment; and this more urgent fear and peril of torment will ever rid pleasure of its sweetness, and restore the wavering soul.

"Therefore, having now set out upon the path of virtue, let us the rather reach forward to what is before. Be not alarmed when you hear speak of virtue, nor regard the name as strangers to it; for it is not far from us, it is not external to us; the work is in us, and the thing is easy, if we have but the will. Greeks travel beyond sea to learn letters,—we need not travel for the kingdom of heaven, or cross the sea for virtue. Christ anticipates us, 'The kingdom of heaven (He says) is within you;' virtue needs but the will.

"We have able and subtle enemies, the evil spirits; with these we must wrestle, as the Apostle says. There is need of much prayer and self-discipline to

gain, through the Holy Spirit, the gift of discerning of spirits, to detect their nature, viz., which of them are the less abandoned, which the more, what is the aim of each, what each affects, and how each is overthrown and ejected. When the Lord came on earth the enemy fell, and his power waxed weak; therefore, as being a tyrant, though powerless, he keeps not quiet even in his fall, but threats, for he can do no more. Let each of you consider this, and he may scorn the evil spirits. Behold, we are here met together and speak against them, and they know that as we make progress they will grow feebler. Had they then leave, they would suffer none of us Christians to live; had they power, they would not come on with a noise, or put forth phantoms, or change their shapes to further their plans; one of them would be enough, did he come, to do what he could and wished to do. Such as have power do not make a display in order to kill another, nor alarm by noises, but use their power to effect at once what they wish. But evil spirits, since they can do nothing, are but actors in a play, changing their appearance and frightening children by their tumult and their make-belief; whereas the true Angel of the Lord, sent by Him against the Assyrians, needed not tumult, appearances, noise, or clatter; but, in that quiet exercise of his power, he slew at once a hundred fourscore and five thousand. But the devils have not power even over the swine: much less over man made in God's image."—§ 14—29.

What can be more calm, more fearless, more noble than his bearing in this passage? Call his life a romance, if you will; still, I say, at least, we have in

the narrative the ideal of a hermit, according to the views of the fourth century. Antony was no savage saint, no ostentatious dervise; he had no pomposity or affectation, nothing of cunning and hypocrisy. According to Athanasius's description, who was personally acquainted with him—

"His countenance had a great and extraordinary beauty in it. This was a gift from the Saviour; for, if he was in company with a number of monks, and any stranger wished to have a sight of him, directly he came to them, he would pass by the rest, and run to Antony, as being attracted by his appearance. Not that he was taller or larger than others; but there was a peculiar composure of manner and purity of soul in him. For, being unruffled in soul, all his outward expressions of feeling were free from perturbation also; so that the joy of his soul made his very face cheerful, and from the gestures of the body might be understood the composure of his soul, according to the text, 'A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance; but sorrow of the heart overcasts it with gloom.' Thus Jacob detected Laban's treachery, and said to his wives, 'I see your father's countenance, that it is not toward me as before.' Thus Samuel, too, discovered David; for he had beaming eyes, and teeth white as milk. In like manner one might recognize Antony; for he was never agitated, his soul being in a deep calm,—never changed countenance, from his inward joyfulness." —§ 67.

His own words assign one of the causes of this tranquillity. He says—

"The vision granted us of the holy ones is not

tumultuous; for 'He shall not strive, nor cry,' nor shall any one hear their voice. So quietly and gently does it come, that the soul is straightway filled with joy, exultation, and confidence, knowing that the Lord is with them, who is our joy, and God the Father's power. And its thoughts are preserved from tumult and tempest; so that, being itself illuminated fully, it is able of itself to contemplate the beings that appear before it. A longing after divine and future things takes possession of it, till it desires altogether to be joined unto them, and to depart with them. Nay, and if there be some who, from the infirmity of man, dread the sight of these good ones, those apparitions remove their alarm at once by their love, as Gabriel did to Zacharias, and the Angel at the divine tomb to the women, and that other who said to the shepherds in the Gospel, 'Fear not.'"—§ 35.

This might be considered mysticism, but for Antony's constant profession and practice of self-denying and active virtue, and the plain practical sense of his exhortations. He took a vigorous part in the religious controversies of his day, reverencing the authorities of the Church, and strenuously opposing both the Meletian schismatics, and the Arians. The following is an account of another of his interviews with heathen philosophers. They came with the hope of jeering at his ignorance of literature:—

"Antony said to them, 'What do you say? which is prior, the mind or letters? And which gives rise to which, mind to letters, or letters to mind?' When they answered that mind was prior, and invented letters, Antony replied, 'He, then, whose mind is in health, does not need letters.' This answer struck

all who were present, as well as them. They went away surprised that an uneducated man should show such understanding. For, indeed, he had nothing of the wildness of one who had lived and grown old on a mountain ; but was polished in his manners, and a man of the world."—§ 73.

It has often been remarked, that the common run of legends and the like fail in point of dignity when they introduce miraculous occurrences. Thus there is something unbecoming, something unlike Scripture, in the account of the flies killed by lightning for settling on a Rabbi's face, or the stones of the heathen temples weeping at the persecutions of the Christians. Now Antony's miracles and visions are so far clear of this defect, that had they been ascribed to St. Peter, or St. Paul, I conceive they would not have been questioned, evidence being supposed. For instance :—

"Once, when he was going to take food, having stood up to pray, about the ninth hour, he felt himself carried away in spirit, and, strange to say, he saw himself, as if out of himself, while he stood looking on, and borne into the air by certain beings. Next, he saw some hateful and terrible shapes, stationed in the air, and stopping the way to prevent his passing on. His conductors resisted, but they asked whether he was not impeachable. But on their beginning to reckon up from his birth, his conductors interrupted them, saying, 'The Lord has wiped out all his earlier sins ; but a reckoning may lawfully be made from the time he became a monk, and promised himself to God.' His accusers, hereupon, began ; but when they could prove nothing, the way

became clear and open; and immediately he found himself returned, as it were, to himself, and forming with himself one Antony as before. Then forgetting his meal, he remained the rest of that day, and the whole of the following night, groaning and praying; for he was astonished at finding against how many we have to wrestle, and by what an effort we must pass through the air heavenward. He remembered that this is what the Apostle said, 'the prince of the power of the air,'—and his special exhortation in consequence, 'Put on the panoply of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day.' When we heard it, we called to mind the Apostle's words, 'Whether in the body, I know not, and whether out of the body, I know not; God knoweth.'"—§ 65.

Again,—

"He had had a discussion with some persons, who had come to him, concerning the intermediate state and place. On the following night, some one calls him from above in these words, 'Antony, rise, go forth, and behold.' Accordingly he went forth, knowing whom he should obey, and, looking up, he saw a huge something, unsightly and horrid, standing and reaching up to the clouds, and persons were ascending as if with wings, and it was catching at them with its hands. Of these, it brought some to a stand; while others, flying past it, went upwards without further trouble. In such cases, that huge monster would gnash its teeth; rejoicing, on the other hand, over those whom it cast down. Immediately Antony heard a voice, saying, 'Look, and understand.' And his mind was opened, and he comprehended that he saw the passage of souls, and

the enemy, envious of believers, seizing and stopping those whom he had an advantage over, but foiled in his attempts upon those who had not obeyed him. After this vision, taking it as a warning, he made still more strenuous efforts to advance forward daily." —§ 66.

Once more,—

"Once, when he was sitting and working, he fell into a trance, and groaned much at the sight he saw. After a while, he turned to those who were with him groaning, and prayed with much trembling, remaining a long time on his knees. When, at length, he rose, the old man began to weep. His friends, trembling and in great alarm themselves, begged to know what it was, and urged him till he was forced to tell. 'O, my children,' he said at length, with a deep sigh, 'it were better to die before that vision is fulfilled.' On their pressing him, he continued with tears, 'Wrath is about to overtake the Church, which is to be given over to men like irrational brutes. For I saw the table of the Lord's house hemmed in by mules, who were striking about with their hoofs at every thing within, as is the way with unmannered beasts. You see, now, why I groaned so much; for I heard a voice, saying, 'My altar shall be polluted.' This the old man saw; two years after, the assault of the Arians took place, when the churches were plundered, and the sacred vessels given to heathens to carry off, and heathens from the workshops compelled to attend the holy communion with them, and in their presence wanton insults offered to the Lord's table."—§ 82.

It is remarkable what anticipated protests Antony

makes against the errors so popular at present in the Roman Church. For instance: the appeal to Scripture, in the narrative of Athanasius, is so frequent and reverential, as to be a virtual proof of his holding our doctrine of its exclusive authority as the record of necessary truth. Some instances have occurred in the course of the citations made above, to which I add the following by way of illustration :—

When he was at Alexandria, during the Maximinian persecution—

"He was like a man in grief, because he did not attain martyrdom ; but the Lord was his preserver for the benefit of us and others, in order that he might be to many an instructor in that ascetic life *which he himself had learned from the Scriptures.*"—§ 46.

It is as well that the (so-called) Bible-Christian of this day should be reminded by such instances as this, that there *are* doctrines which a plain, unlettered, but honest mind, may draw from Scripture over and above that jejune frame-work of words which *he* identifies with the whole counsel of God.

Again—

"This was his constant commandment to all the monks who came to him—to believe in the Lord, and to love Him ; to preserve themselves from evil thoughts and carnal pleasures, and, as it is written in the Proverbs, 'not to be seduced by a full meal ;' to flee vain glory ; to pray continually ; to sing before and after sleep ; *to commit to their hearts the Scripture commandments*, and to remember the lives of the saints ; so that the soul, being warned by the one, might shape itself into an imitation of the other.

. . . Let every one take daily account of his deeds, by day and night; if he has sinned in aught, let him amend; if not, let him not boast, but persevere in what is holy, not be negligent, not condemn his neighbour, nor justify himself (as the blessed Apostle Paul has said) before the Lord come, who searcheth what is secret. For it often happens, that we do not understand ourselves in what we do; we do not know, but the Lord detects all things."—§ 56.

And in his last address to the brethren before his death, he says—

"Keep yourselves pure from them [the Arians and Meletians], holding safe the tradition of the Fathers, and, above all, that pious faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, *which ye have learned from the Scriptures*, and have often been *reminded of* by me."—§ 89.

Again, the tenet of purgatory, in its popular acceptation, is plainly, though indirectly, contravened in the second, not to say the first also, of those visions related above.

And again, in his last instructions before his death, we have a clear protest against superstitions respecting relics, which were at that time spreading in the Church, which he condemns, be it observed, as being in his age not a Catholic, but a local custom of Egypt. This, however, introduces us to the account of his last illness and death, which follows the extract just made. The address, of which it is part, was spoken when he was on a sort of visitation of his brethren, as it may be called. The narrative runs thus:—

"The brethren urging him to remain with them,

and there finish his course, he would not hear of it, as for other reasons, which were evident, even though he did not mention them, so especially because of the custom of the Egyptians in respect to the dead. For the bodies of good men, especially of the holy martyrs, they used to enfold in linen cloths; and, instead of burying, to place them upon biers, and keep them within their houses, thinking thus to honour the departed. Antony had applied even to bishops on this subject, begging them to admonish their people; and had urged it upon laymen, and rebuked women, saying, that the practice was consistent neither with received rule, nor at all with religion. 'The bodies of patriarchs and prophets are preserved to this day in sepulchres; and the Lord's body itself was laid in a tomb, and a stone at the entrance kept it hidden till He rose the third day.' By such arguments he showed the irregularity of not burying the dead, however holy; 'for what can be more precious or holy than the Lord's body?' And he persuaded many to bury for the future, with thanksgivings to the Lord for such good instruction.

"Antony, then, being aware of this, and fearing lest the same should be done to his own body, bidding farewell to the monks in the outer mountain, made hastily for the inner mountain, where he commonly dwelt, and, after a few months, fell ill. Then calling to him two who lived with him, as ascetics, for fifteen years past, and ministered to him on account of his age, he said to them, 'I, as it is written, go the way of my fathers; for I perceive I am called by the Lord. You, then, be sober, and forfeit not the reward of your long asceticism; but, as those

who have made a beginning, be diligent to hold fast your earnestness. Ye know the assaults of the evil spirits, how fierce they are, yet how powerless. Fear them not; rather breathe the Spirit of Christ, and believe in Him always. Live as if dying daily; take heed to yourselves, and remember the admonitions you have heard from me. Have no fellowship with the schismatics, nor at all with the heretical Arians. Be diligent the rather to join yourselves, first of all, to the Lord, next to the saints, that after death they may receive you as friends and intimates into the eternal habitations. Such be your thoughts, such your spirit; and if you have any care for me, remember me as a father. Do not let them carry my body into Egypt, lest they store it in their houses. One of my reasons for coming to this mountain was to hinder this. You know I have ever reproved those who have done this, and charged them to cease from the custom. Bury, then, my body in the earth, in obedience to my word, so that no one may know the place, except yourselves. In the resurrection of the dead it will be restored to me incorruptible by the Saviour. Distribute my garments as follows:—Let Athanasius, the bishop, have the one sheep-skin and the garment I sleep on, which he gave me new, and which has grown old with me. Let Serapion, the bishop, have the other sheep-skin. As to the hair-shirt, keep it for yourselves. And now, my children, farewell; Antony is going, and is no longer with you.'

"After these words, they kissed him. Then he stretched himself out, and seemed to see friends come to him, and to be very joyful at the sight, (to judge

from the cheerfulness of his countenance as he lay;) and so he breathed his last, and was gathered to his fathers. His attendants, as he had bidden them, wrapped his body up, and buried it; and no one knows yet where it lies, except these two. As to the two friends who were bequeathed a sheep-skin a-piece of the blessed Antony, and his tattered garment, each of them preserves it as a great possession. For when he looks at it, he thinks he sees Antony; and when he puts it on, he is, as it were, carrying about him his instructions with joy."—§ 90, 92.

Such was in life and death the first founder of the monastic system; and his example, both as seen, and far more in the narrative of his biographer, was like a fire kindled in Christendom, which "many waters could not quench." Not that I would panegyrize any *popular* form of religion, considering that its popularity implies some condescension to the weaknesses of human nature; yet, if I must choose between the fashionable doctrines of one age and of another, certainly I shall prefer that which requires self-denial, and creates hardihood and contempt of the world, to some of the creeds now in esteem, which rob faith of all its substance, its grace, its nobleness, and its strength, and excuse self-indulgence by the arguments of spiritual pride, self-confidence and security;—which in short make it their boast that they are much more *comfortable* than that ancient creed which, together with joy, leads men to continual smiting on the breast, and prayers for pardon, and looking forward to the judgment-day, as to an event really to happen to themselves individually.

The following is Athanasius's account of the effect produced by Antony in Egypt, even in his lifetime; which, rhetorical as it may seem, is, after all, a correct representation of the visible change in the world wrought by his example, and affords a pleasing hope that, out of so much of outward manifestation, there was much of the substance of religion within.

"Among the mountains there were monasteries, as if tabernacles filled with divine choirs, singing, studying, fasting, praying, exulting in the hope of things to come, and working for almsdeeds, having love and harmony one towards another. And truly it was given one there to see a peculiar country of piety and righteousness. Neither injurer nor injured was there, nor chiding of the tax-collector; but a multitude of ascetics, whose one feeling was towards holiness. So that a stranger, seeing the monasteries and their order, would be led to cry out, 'How beauteous are thy homes, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel; as shady groves, as a garden on a river, as tents which the Lord has pitched, and as cedars by the waters.'"—§ 44.

I cannot conclude more appropriately than by Herbert's lines on the subject. Speaking of Religion he says:—

> "To Egypt first she came; where they did prove
> Wonders of anger once, but now of love.
> The Ten Commandments there did flourish, more
> Than the ten bitter plagues had done before.
> *Holy Macarius and great Antony*
> Made Pharaoh, Moses; changing the history.
> Goshen was darkness; Egypt, full of lights;
> Nilus, for monsters, brought forth Israelites.

Such power hath mighty baptism to produce,
For things misshapen, things of highest use.
How dear to me, O God, thy counsels are!
Who may with thee compare?"

Church Militant.—v. 37, 38.

CHAPTER XX.

MARTIN, THE APOSTLE OF GAUL.

"Gird Thee with Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Thou Most Mighty, according to Thy worship and renown; good luck have Thou with Thine honour; ride on because of the word of truth, of meekness, and righteousness; and Thy right hand shall teach Thee terrible things."

Who has not heard of St. Martin, Bishop of Tours, and Confessor? In our part of the world at least he is well known, as far as name goes, by the churches dedicated to him. Even from British times a church has existed under his tutelage in the afterwards metropolitan city of Canterbury; though we know little or nothing of churches to St. Ambrose, St. Augustine, St. Jerome, St. Basil, or St. Athanasius. Considering how many of our temples are called after the Apostles, and how many of them piously preserve the earthly name of those who almost "have no remembrance, and are as if they had not been," as St. George, or St. Nicolas; it is a peculiarity in St. Martin's history that he should at once be so well known and so widely venerated; renowned in this life yet honoured after it. And such honour has been paid him from the first. He died in the last years of the fourth century; his successor at Tours built a chapel over his tomb in that city; St. Perpetuus, another successor, about 70 years afterwards, built a church and con-

veyed his relics thither. In the course of another 70 years his name had taken up its abode in Canterbury, where it remains. Soon after a church was dedicated to him at Rome, and soon after in Spain. He alone of the Confessors had a service of his own in the more ancient breviaries; he is named too in the mass service of Pope Gregory,—which commemorates, after St. Mary and the Apostles, "Linus, Cletus, Clement, Sextus, Cornelius, Cyprian, Laurence, Chrysostom, John and Paul, Cosmas and Damian, Hilary, *Martin*, Augustine, Gregory, Jerome, Benedict and all Saints."

I am not going to present the reader with more than a slight sketch of his history, which we have received on very authentic testimony, as in the case of St. Antony, though St. Martin like him has left no writings behind him. Nay, perhaps more so, for the biographer of St. Martin is not merely a friend, who sometimes saw him, though a great authority in himself, but a disciple, and intimate, and eyewitness, as well as a man of cultivated and classical mind,—Sulpicius Severus, who wrote his memoir even while the subject of it was alive, and while his memory was fresh.

Martin was born about the year 316, in Pannonia, in a town which now forms part of Hungary; his father was a pagan, and had risen from the ranks to the command of a cohort. A soldier has no home, and his son was brought up at Pavia in North Italy with very little education. What influenced Martin is not known; but at the age of ten he fled to the Church against the wish of his parents, and enrolled himself as a catechumen. Under these first impressions, he formed the desire of retiring to the desert as

a solitary ; however, things do not happen here below after our wishes ; so at fifteen, he was seized, upon his father's instance, and enlisted in the army. In consequence, he remained a soldier five years, and was sent into Gaul. It is recorded of him, that at a time when he was stationed at Amiens, being then eighteen, he encountered at the gate of the city a poor man without clothes. It was mid-winter, and the weather more than ordinarily severe ; he had nothing on him but his single military cloak and his arms. The youth took his sword, cut the cloak in two, and gave half to the beggar. The bystanders jeered or admired, according to their turn of mind ; and he went away. Next night he had a dream : he saw our Lord clad in the half cloak which he had bestowed on the poor man. Christ commanded his notice, and then said to the Angels who stood around, "Martin, yet a catechumen, hath wrapped me in this garment." On this Martin proceeded forthwith to baptism, and two years afterwards left the army.

He then had recourse to the celebrated St. Hilary, who was afterwards bishop of Poictiers, and an illustrious confessor in the Arian troubles. Martin, however, was destined to precede him in suffering, and that in the same holy cause. He undertook a visit to his parents, who now seem to have retired into Pannonia, with a view to their conversion. When he was in the passes of the Alps he fell in with bandits. Sulpicius gives this account of what happened :—"One of them raised an axe and aimed it at his head, but another intercepted the blow. However, his hands were bound behind him, and he was given in custody to one of them for plunder.

This man took him aside, and began to ask him who he was. He answered, 'A Christian.' He then inquired whether he felt afraid. He avowed, without wavering, that he never felt so much at ease, being confident that the Lord's mercy would be specially with him in temptations; rather he felt sorry for him, who, living by robbery, was unworthy of the mercy of Christ. Entering, then, on the subject of the Gospel, he preached the Word of God to him. To be brief, the robber believed, attended on him, and set him on his way, begging his prayers. This man afterwards was seen in the profession of religion; so that the above narrative is given as he was heard to state it."—*Vit. M.* c. 4.

He gained his mother, but his father persisted in paganism. At this time Illyricum was almost given over to Arianism. He did not scruple to confess the orthodox doctrine there, was seized, beaten with rods publicly, and cast out of the city. Little, however, is known of these years of his life. Driven from Illyricum, he betook himself to Milan, A.D. 356, when he was about forty years old. Here he lived several years in solitude, till he was again driven out by the Arian bishop Auxentius. On leaving Hilary, he had promised to return to him; and now Hilary being restored from exile, he kept his word, after a separation of about nine or ten years. He came to Poictiers, and formed in the neighbourhood the first monastic establishment which is known to have existed in France.

St. Martin is famous for his alleged miraculous power. Sulpicius's memoir is full of accounts of miracles wrought by him. He is even said to have raised the dead. I cannot deny that a chance reader would

regard his life merely as an early specimen of demonology. Whether the works attributed to him were really miracles, and whether they really took place, I leave to the private judgment of each reader of them. What has been said in former chapters applies here; it is difficult often to draw the line between real and apparent interruptions of the course of nature; and, in an age of miracles, ordinary events will be exaggerated into supernatural: veneration, too, for an individual, will, at such a time, occasion the ordinary effects of his sagacity or presence of mind to be accounted more than human.

He was made bishop of Tours in the year 372, about the time that Ambrose and Basil were raised to their respective sees, and that Athanasius died. There were parties who opposed Martin's election, alleging, as Sulpicius tells us, that "he was a contemptible person, unworthy of the episcopate, despicable in countenance, mean in dress, rough in his hair." Such were the outward signs of a monk; and a monk he did not cease to be after he had become a bishop. Indeed, as far as was possible, he wished to be still just what he had been, and looked back to the period of his life when he was a private man, as a time when he was more sensibly favoured with divine power than afterwards. Sulpicius thus speaks of him in his episcopate:—

"He remained just what he was before; with the same humbleness of heart, the same meanness of dress, and with a fulness of authority and grace which responded to the dignity of a bishop without infringing on the rule and the virtue of a monk. For a while he lived in a cell built on to the church; but,

unable to bear the interruptions of visitors, he made himself a monastery about two miles out of the city. So secret and retired was the place, that he did not miss the solitude of the desert. On one side it was bounded by the high and precipitous rock of a mountain, on the other the level was shut in by the river Loire, which makes a gentle bend. There was but one way into it, and that very narrow. His own cell was of wood. Many of the brethren made themselves dwellings of the same kind, but most hollowed out the stone of the mountain which was above them. There were eighty scholars who were under training after the pattern of their saintly master. No one had aught his own; all things were thrown into a common stock. It was not lawful, as to most monks, to buy or sell any thing. They had no art except that of transcribing, which was assigned to the younger: the older gave themselves up to prayer. They seldom left their cell, except to attend the place of prayer. They took their meal together after the time of fasting. No one tasted wine, except compelled by bodily weakness. Most of them were clad in camel's hair; a softer garment was a crime; and what of course makes it more remarkable is, that many of them were accounted noble, who, after a very different education, had forced themselves to this humility and patience; and we have lived to see a great many of them bishops. For what is that city or church which did not covet priests from the monastery of Martin?"—*Vit. M.* c. 7.

Once on a time, a person whom he had benefited by his prayers, sent him a hundred pounds of silver. Martin put it aside for redeeming captives. Some of

the brothers suggested that their own fare was scanty and their clothing deficient. "We," he made answer, "are fed and clad by the Church, provided we seem to appropriate nothing to ourselves."—*Dial.* iii. 19.

It will be seen from the former of these passages, that St. Martin, though not himself a man of learning, made his monastic institution subservient to theological purposes. This monastery became afterwards famous under the name of the Abbey of Marmoutier; and eventually it conformed to the Benedictine rule.

St. Martin was a man of action still more than he was a man of meditation; and his episcopate is marked with strenuous deeds sufficient to convince all readers of his history, that, whatever blame this age may be disposed to throw on him, it cannot be made on the side of mysticism or indolence. Gaul was, even at this time, almost pagan: its cities, indeed, had long enjoyed the light of Christianity, and had had the singular privilege of contributing both Greek and Latin Fathers to the Catholic Church. Marseilles, Lyons, Vienne, Toulouse, Tours, Arles, Narbonne, Orleans, Paris, Clermont, and Limoges, seem to have been episcopal sees; but the country people had never been evangelized, and still frequented their idol temples. In the first years of Martin's episcopate, heathen sacrifices were forbidden by law; and the resignation with which the pagans submitted to the edict, showed at least, what the history of the times so often shows otherwise, that their religion had no great hold upon their hearts. Martin took upon him to enter and destroy the kingdom of Satan with

his own hands. He went, unarmed, among the temples, the altars, the statues, the groves, and the processions of the false worship, attended by his monastic brethren : he presented himself to the barbarian multitude, converted them, and made them join with him in the destruction of their time-honoured establishment of evil. What were his weapons of success does not appear, unless we are willing to accept his contemporary biographer's statement, that he was attended by a divine influence manifesting itself in distinct and emphatic miracles.

It is difficult to assign the limits of his diocese, and perhaps they were not very accurately determined. On the east of Tours, we hear of his evangelical prowess in Burgundy and the neighbourhood of Autun, and on the north towards Chartres ; the nearest sees round about were Poictiers, Limoges, Clermont, and Orleans ; and his presence is mentioned, though perhaps on political or synodal business, at Paris, Treves, and Vienne. In consequence of his triumphant exertions, he is considered the apostle of Gaul ; and this function, let it be observed, may account for his having that special gift of miracles which is ascribed to him, though this general admission does not oblige us to put credit in each particular statement made concerning its exercise.

It may probably occur to some one to ask how it is that miraculous narratives, such as those which occur in the lives of St. Martin and St. Antony, belong to places removed from the populous thoroughfares of the world, and the keen eyes of science. The supernatural incidents in Antony's life are for the

most part the produce of the desert; and in Martin's they were the persuasives of a barbarous people. The obvious answer is, that towns had already been converted by miracle, and the divine gift travelled onwards. It is remarkable too, that St. Paul did no miracle among the heathens of Athens, and scarcely at Corinth, but among the barbarous Lycaonians who had faith, and the ignorant people of Melita. Nay, as if some unknown law of divine agency were in operation, it is expressly said of our Blessed Lord Himself, that in one place "He did not many mighty works, because of their unbelief." A living writer of great genius has suggested the existence of a parallel law of connexion between barbarous countries and demoniacal influence.

"Many travellers," he says, "who have been conversant with savages, have been fully persuaded that their jugglers actually possessed some means of communication with the invisible world, and exercised a supernatural power which they derived from it. And not missionaries only have believed this, and old travellers who lived in ages of credulity, but more recent observers, such as Carver and Bruce, whose testimony is of great weight, and who were neither ignorant, nor weak, nor credulous men. What I have read concerning ordeals, also staggers me; and I am sometimes inclined to think it more possible, that where there has been full faith on all sides, these appeals to divine justice may have been answered by Him who sees the secrets of all hearts, than that mode of trial should have been provided so long and so generally, from some of which no person could ever have escaped without an interpo-

sition of Providence. . . . May it not be, that by such means in dark ages, and among blind nations, the purpose is effected of preserving conscience and the belief of our immortality, without which the life of our life would be extinct? And with regard to the conjurers of the African and American savages, would it be unreasonable to suppose that, as the most elevated devotion brings us into fellowship with the Holy Spirit, a correspondent degree of wickedness may effect a communion with evil intelligences[1]?" If then there be some special Satanic influence in a pagan country, it is not surprising that Christianity should meet it with a correspondent supernatural power on its side.

Martin was not content with destroying the heathen temples; he built churches in their place. At first sight it may be questioned whether the better course would not have been to spare the temples and to consecrate them to Christian uses; but probably they were very rude and miserable buildings, and either not worth preserving, or not capable of a convenient adaptation. In the cities the Church seems to have preserved and retained them; except, indeed, at first, when there was an obvious wisdom in accepting the state's permission to destroy them, when their abiding presence would have suggested to the pagans hopes of the future restoration of their idolatry. Add to this, it cannot be denied there was a difference of opinion in the early Fathers, whether, and how far, the fine arts which had been exercised on the temples of idolatry, might lawfully be applied to

[1] Southey's Colloquies. Introduction.

the service of religion. The conversion of the emperors brought with it into the Church wealth, and the skill to use it; it seemed pious and dutiful to dedicate these gifts to God: and, moreover, a direct fulfilment of the prophecy, that "the glory of Lebanon should come unto" the Church, "to glorify the place of the sanctuary," that "the sons of strangers should build her walls," and the ships of Tarshish bring silver and gold, and that "her windows should be agates, and gates carbuncles;" illustrated too, as this prophecy had been by the offering of the Magi, who brought gold, frankincense, and myrrh, to their divine Lord, when as yet an infant in arms, with temptation and suffering before Him. However, a natural jealousy would be sure to exist in holy men, lest the inward glory of the Gospel should be sacrificed to its material decorations; the Arian or rather semi-Arian faction had been busy in the erection of churches; and we find Jerome, Epiphanius, and Isidore, not to search deeply into the history of the times, discouraging the spirit which was rising on all sides of them.

For instance, Jerome says, in the letter to Demetrias, which has already come before us, speaking of the disposal of her property: "Let others build churches, incase the walls with marble, transport immense columns, and gild their heads, which cannot feel the precious decoration: let them ornament the folding-doors with ivory and silver, and the altars with gold and jewels. I do not blame, I do not dissent; let every one be fully persuaded in his own mind. It is better so to do, than to brood over one's store of wealth. But something else is proposed to you; to clothe Christ in the poor, to visit Him in

the sick, to feed Him in the hungry, to entertain Him in the houseless, especially in 'the household of faith,' to maintain monasteries of virgins, to have a care of the servants of God, and poor in spirit, who day and night serve your Lord, who, though on earth, imitate the life of Angels, and speak nothing but God's praises, and 'having food and raiment,' rejoice in this wealth as desirous of nought besides, that is, if they keep their resolve. Else, if they desire more, they show themselves unworthy too of what is necessary. I speak to a rich virgin, and a noble virgin." —*Ep.* 130.

But to return to St. Martin: one other passage of his history shall here be mentioned, if that can so be called which brings before us his departure from this life into the unseen world. Something more of his deeds in the flesh shall be reserved for the next and concluding chapter.

He had been at a place, at the extremity of his charge, to settle a quarrel existing between the clergy there. When he set out to return, his strength suddenly failed him, and he felt his end was approaching. A fever had already got possession of him. He assembled his disciples, and announced to them that he was going: they, with passionate laments, deprecated such a dispensation, as involving the exposure of his flock to the wolves. The saint was moved, and used words which have become famous in the Church, "Lord, if I be yet necessary to thy people, I decline not the labour; Thy will be done!" His wish was heard, not his prayer. His fever lay upon him; during the trial he continued his devotions as usual, causing himself to be laid in

sackcloth and ashes. On his disciples asking to be allowed to place straw under him instead, he made answer, "Sons, it becomes a Christian to die in ashes. Did I set other example, I should sin myself." They wished to turn him on his side, to ease his position; but he expressed a wish to see heaven rather than earth, that his spirit might, as it were, be setting out on its journey. It is said, that on this he saw the evil spirit at his side; and he addressed him in words expressive of his assurance, that his Lord's merits were fully imparted to him, and his soul perfected. "Beast of blood," he exclaimed, "why standest thou here? Deadly one, thou shalt find nothing in me; Abraham's bosom is receiving me." With these words he died.

At this time Sulpicius his biographer was away, apparently at Toulouse. One morning a friend had just departed from him; he was sitting alone in his cell, thinking of the future and the past, his sins, and the last judgment. "My limbs," he writes to the friend who had thus left him, "being wearied by the anguish of my mind, I laid them down on my bed, and, as is customary in sorrow, fell into a sleep; —the sleep of the morning hours, light and broken, and taking but wavering and doubtful possession of the limbs, when one seems, contrary to the nature of deep slumber, to be almost awake in one's sleep. Then suddenly I seem to myself to see holy Martin, the bishop, clad in a white robe, with face like a flame, eyes like stars, and glittering hair; and, while his person was what I had known it to be, yet, what can hardly be expressed, I could not look at him, though I could recognize him. He slightly

smiled on me, and bore in his right hand the book which I had written of his life. I embrace his sacred knees, and ask the blessing as usual; and feel the soft touch of his hand on my head, while, together with the usual words of blessing, he repeats the name of the cross, familiar in his mouth: next, while I gaze upon him, and cannot take my fill of his face and look, suddenly he is caught aloft, till, after completing the immense spaces of the air, I following with my eyes the swift cloud that carried him, he is received into the open heaven, and can be seen no more. Not long after, I see the holy presbyter Clare, his disciple, who had lately died, ascending after his master. I, shameless one, desire to follow; while I set about it, and strain after lofty steps, I wake up, and, shaking off my sleep, begin to rejoice in the vision, when a boy, who was with me, enters sadder than usual, with a speaking and sorrowful countenance: 'Why so sad and eager to speak?' say I: 'Two monks,' he answers, 'are just come from Tours; they bring the news that Martin is departed.' I was overcome, I confess; my tears burst forth, I wept abundantly. Even now while I write, my brother, my tears are flowing, nor is any comfort adequate to this most unruly grief. However, when the news came, I felt a wish that you should be partner in my grief, who were companion in my love. Come then to me at once, that we may mourn together, whom we love together; although I am aware that such a man is not really to be mourned, who, after conquering and triumphing over the world, has at length received the crown of righteousness."—*Ep.* 2.

This letter is written to a private friend, at the time of St. Martin's death, as appears on the face of it; the memoirs of the saint are written with equal earnestness and simplicity. They were circulated throughout Christendom, with astonishing rapidity: but the miraculous accounts they contained, were a difficulty with great numbers. Accordingly, in the last of his publications, Sulpicius gave the names of living witnesses in corroboration of his own statements. "Far be such suspicion," he adds, "from any one who lives under God's eye; for Martin does not need support from fictions; however, I open before Thee, O Christ, the fidelity of my whole narrative, that I have neither said, nor will say, ought but that I have either seen myself, or have ascertained from plain authorities, or for the most part from his own mouth."—*Dial.* iii. 5.

Martin was buried at Tours, and two thousand of his monks attended the funeral. He was more than eighty years old at the time of his death, out of which he had been Bishop twenty-five. Some say that he died on a Sunday, at midnight. His festival in our calendar, as in the Latin Church, is placed on the 11th of November, the day either of his death, or of his burial. His remains were preserved in his episcopal city, till the latter days, when the Huguenots seized and burned them. Some bones, however, are said still to remain.

CHAPTER XXI.

MARTIN AND PRISCILLIAN.

"Destroy him not; for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord's anointed and be guiltless? As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him, or his day shall come to die, or he shall descend into battle, and perish."

As I began, so will I end, with a story of a bishop and a king; but with this addition, that, as in the former case, Ambrose showed how a Christian might be persecuted, so, in this, Martin, and Ambrose too, shall show how a Christian may not persecute. Persecution, indeed, has a variety of meanings, some persons thinking themselves *ipso facto* persecuted, when men in power merely refuse to adopt and promote their opinions. What I mean here by persecution will be clear as I proceed.

The sovereign with whom Martin came in contact was Maximus, the usurper of Britain, Gaul, and Spain, of whom we have already heard in the history of St. Ambrose. Gratian becoming unpopular, Maximus had been proclaimed emperor by the soldiers in Britain, had landed on the opposite coast with a great portion of the British nation (who emigrated on the occasion, and settled afterwards in Bretagne), and had been joined by the armies of Gaul. Gratian had fled from Paris to Lyons, attended by only 300 horse; the governor of the Lyonese had played the traitor, and Maximus's

general of horse had come up and murdered the emperor. The usurper incurred, not unjustly, the stigma of the crime by which he profited, though he protested, whether truly or not, that he was not privy to the intentions of his subordinate. He was equally earnest, and perhaps sincere, in maintaining that he had been proclaimed by the legions of Britain against his will. So much Sulpicius confirms, speaking of him, as "a man to be named for every excellence of life, if it had been allowed him either to refuse a diadem placed upon him, not legitimately, by a mutinous soldiery, or to abstain from civil war;" "but," he continues, "a great sway could neither be refused without hazard, nor be held without arms."—*Dial.* ii. 7.

Maximus established his court at Treves, and thither proceeded a number of bishops to intercede, as in duty bound, for criminals, captives, exiles, proscribed persons, and others whom the civil commotion had involved. Martin went up with the rest, and it soon became obvious to the world that there was some vast difference between him and them; that they allowed themselves in flattery and subserviency towards the usurper, but that Martin recollected that he had the authority of an Apostle, and was bound to treat the fortunate soldier not according to his success, but according to his conduct. In this behaviour he had been anticipated by St. Ambrose, shortly before, who, on his former embassy to Maximus from Justina, had refused to communicate with him, or with those bishops who had communicated with him.

It was Martin's office to give this military sovereign a second lesson of the spirit of that religion, which, being from heaven, knows not the distinctions between man and man. Maximus asked him, again and again, to the imperial table, but in vain; he declined, "alleging," according to Sulpicius, "that he could not partake in the hospitality of one who had deprived one emperor of his dominions, another of his life." "However," continues our biographer, "when Maximus declared that he had not of his own will assumed the imperial power; that he had but defended in arms that forced sovereignty which the troops had, by a Divine Providence, imposed on him; that God's favour did not seem estranged from one who had gained such incredible success; and that he had killed no enemy, except in the field: at length, overcome either by his arguments or his prayers, he came to supper, the emperor rejoicing wonderfully that he had prevailed with him."—*Vit. M.* 23.

Martin seems to have been not quite satisfied with his concession, and Maximus seemed determined to make the most of it. The day of entertainment was made quite a gala day; the first personages were invited; the monk Martin was placed on a couch close to the king, and near him was his attendant presbyter, seated between two counts of the highest rank, the brother and uncle of the emperor. In the middle of the banquet, according to custom, the wine-cup was handed to Maximus; he transferred it to Martin, wishing him first to taste, and then to pass it to himself with the blessing and good auspice

which a bishop would convey. Martin took it, and drank; but he saw through the artifice; and, instead of handing it to the emperor, passed it to his own presbyter, as being higher in true rank, as Sulpicius says, than any other, even the most noble, who were there assembled.

Maximus was a crafty man; and perhaps he thought he had discovered a weak point in Martin. He broke out into admiration of his conduct, and his guests did the like. Martin gained more by loftiness than others by servility. The feast ended; not so the emperor's assaults upon a saintly personage. He presented him with a vase of porphyry, and it was accepted.

Maximus now became a penitent, with what sincerity it is impossible to say. And at length, it would appear, he obtained absolution from Martin for his crimes; he sent for him often, and communed with him on the present and the future, on the glory of the faithful and the immortality of saints. Meanwhile the empress took her part in humbling herself before one who, of all men alive, had, in his miraculous power, the clearest credentials of his commission from the Author of all grace. She attended the exhortations of the aged bishop, and wept at his feet: but let us hear Sulpicius's account of what happened. "Martin," he says, "who never had been touched by any woman, could not escape this lady's assiduous, or rather servile attentions. Neither the power of dominion, nor the dignity of empire, nor the diadem, nor the purple did she regard. Prostrate on the ground, they could not tear her from Martin's feet. At length she begged her husband, and then both begged Martin, to allow her, by herself, without

assistance of attendants, to serve him up a repast; nor could the blessed man hold out longer. The hands of the empress go through the chaste service; she spreads a seat: she places a table by it; water she offers for his hands; food, which she herself had cooked, she sets before him; she at a distance, as servants are taught, stands motionless, as if fixed to the ground, while he sits; showing in all things the reverence of an attendant, and the humbleness of a handmaid. She mixes his draught, she presents it to him. When the small meal is ended, she sweeps up with all carefulness the broken bits and crumbs of bread, preferring such relics to imperial dainties. Blessed woman, in such devotion willing to be compared to her who came from the ends of the earth to hear Solomon!"—*Dial.* ii. 7. Yes, blessed the princess who performs such humble service; but more blessed she who gives than he who takes. Let us see what came of it.

Maximus was not only a penitent, but he was a champion of the orthodox faith; nay, even to enforcing it with the sword. And Martin, while at court, had not only to intercede for the partisans of Gratian, but also, if possible, to rescue from the said imperial sword, and from the cruel zeal of some brother bishops, certain heretics who had been treated with unjustifiable severity, both by Church and state. These were the Priscillianists of Spain, and their principal persecutor was Ithacius, a bishop of the same country. Their history was as follows:—Priscillian, a man of birth, ability, and character, undertook in Spain the dissemination of an Egyptian form of the Gnostic or Manichæan heresy, and

formed a party. The new opinions spread through all parts of the country, and that the more, in consequence of indiscreet violence on the part of the metropolitan of Lusitania. Next, a council was held of Spanish and Aquitain bishops, who condemned several of their brethren who had embraced the heresy, and all who should associate with them. The denounced bishops met this proceeding by consecrating Priscillian to the see of Avila; and Idacius, the metropolitan aforesaid, and Ithacius, who were charged with the execution of the synodal decree, retaliated by calling on the civil power to drive the heretics out of the cities. This was what Sulpicius calls a "foul" request; however, by repeated solicitations, Idacius obtained a rescript from Gratian, then emperor, commanding the extermination of the heretics, one and all, not only from churches and cities, but from every country. The heretic bishops made for Rome, with the hope of gaining Damasus; failing with the see of St. Peter, they betook themselves to Milan. Failing equally with Ambrose, they adopted a new line of conduct, bribed the officers of the court, gained a rescript of just an opposite character, commanding their restoration to their churches, and secured its zealous execution. This was the state of things when Gratian lost his life by the revolt of Maximus, who was in consequence naturally disposed to take part against the heretics whom the fallen court had supported.

Ithacius had been obliged to fly to Gaul; and in A. D. 384, when the civil troubles were over, he went up to Treves, had an interview with Maximus,

and obtained from him a summons of the heretics to a council to be held at Bourdeaux. Priscillian was obliged to attend; but being put on his defence, instead of answering, he appealed to the emperor, and the orthodox bishops committed the second scandalous fault of allowing his appeal.

Such an appeal, in a matter of faith or internal discipline, was contrary at once to principle and precedent. It was inconsistent with the due maintenance of our Lord's canon, "Cæsar's to Cæsar, and God's to God;" and with the rule contained in St. Paul's charge to Timothy, to "keep the deposit;" and it had been already condemned in the case of the Donatists, who, on appealing to Constantine against the Church, had incurred both the protest of the Catholic Fathers, and the indignant refusal of the emperor. However, the Ithacians, having allowed the state to persecute, found it difficult to withstand its right to interfere. This is the point of time in which Martin enters into the history of the dispute; Priscillian was brought to Treves; Ithacius and Idacius, his accusers, followed; and there they found Martin, come thither, as we have seen, on matters of his own.

If it is necessary to state in a few words as near as may be what seems to be the doctrine of early times on the subject of persecution, I suppose it would be something like this: that the Church availed herself of the offer of the civil power to confirm her judgments so far as to silence heretical teachers, no difficult matter at a time when the idea of absolute power was fully apprehended, the habit of liberty of speech unknown, and transportation an

ultima ratio, if the threat of it was not sufficient. The Church having once denounced a doctrine as false, left it to the conscience of the state to prevent its dissemination; but she abhorred cruelty and bloodshed, and she denied the state's right of taking direct cognizance of error, and of punishing it as such, or otherwise than as an offence against herself, the divinely appointed teacher of the faith. Martin, then, on every account, viewed the Ithacian faction with displeasure; he condemned the appeals which in a matter of faith had been made to the civil power, and he looked forward with horror at the sort of punishment which that power was likely to inflict. Accordingly he remonstrated incessantly with Ithacius on the course he was pursuing; and Ithacius, who seems to have been a man of loud speech, and luxurious and prodigal habits, did not scruple to retort upon the devout and ascetic Martin, that he himself was a Gnostic, and therefore naturally took the part of the Priscillianists.

Unable to persuade his brother bishops, he addressed himself to Maximus, representing to him, to use the words of Sulpicius, "that it was more than enough, that, after the heretics had been condemned by an episcopal decision, they should be removed from their churches; but that it was a new and unheard-of impiety for a temporal judge to take cognizance of an ecclesiastical cause."—*Hist.* ii. The interposition of one to whom emperor and empress were paying such extraordinary court, of course was of no slight weight. It was effectual for protecting the Priscillianists all the time he continued at Treves; but the time came when he must take his departure

for Tours; and before doing so, he exacted a promise of the usurper, that nothing sanguinary should be perpetrated against the heretics.

He went; Ithacius did not go; the promise was forgotten; matters went on as if Martin had never been at Treves; the heretics were tried by the judge of the palace, and were found guilty of witchcraft and various immoralities. Priscillian and others were beheaded, and others were killed and banished afterwards; Ithacius sheltered himself under the protection of Maximus, and Maximus wrote to the see of St. Peter, not to justify, but to take credit for his conduct.

What return he, or rather his ecclesiastical advisers, received from Siricius, the pope of the day, and from the body of the Church, need not here be mentioned in detail. Suffice it to say, that a solemn protest was entered against them, in the course of the following years, by Siricius, St. Ambrose, and councils at Milan and Turin. Ithacius was deposed, excommunicated, and banished. Felix, bishop of Treves, though a man of irreproachable character, and not bishop at the time of the crime, yet, as a partizan of the guilty bishops, was excommunicated with all who supported him; and when St. Ambrose came to Treves, on his second embassy, he separated himself not only from the adherents of Maximus, but of Ithacius too. This, however, is to anticipate and to digress upon subsequent and general history; let us confine ourselves to St. Martin.

On the year that followed the death of Priscillian, Martin had again to visit Treves, as a mediator for certain civil governors, Narses and Leucadius, whose

loyalty to Gratian had gained them the resentment of his conqueror,—a council of bishops being then assembled in the imperial city, with the double purpose of formally acquitting Ithacius, and of consecrating Felix, one of their own party, to the vacant see of Treves. The news arrived that Martin was coming; and spread great dismay among the assembled Fathers. They betook themselves to Maximus, and gained his consent to forbid his entrance into the city, except on a promise of communicating with themselves. Martin eluded their vigilance, and entered at night. He had come, as I have said, on political business, though such as became a bishop to undertake; but when he got to Treves, he was met with news which more intimately concerned every Catholic, and needed more prompt and urgent intercession. A day or two before he came, the Ithacian party had prevailed on the emperor to send military commissioners into Spain to detect, arrest, pillage, and kill all heretics; a mission which, considering that the broad test of heresy which the soldiers adopted was paleness of face and peculiarity of dress, was likely to terminate in a great accession, doubtless, of wealth to the imperial treasury, but in as great a destruction of innocent persons and orthodox believers. This grievous consequence pressed upon Martin, over and above the cruelty of persecuting heretics; though "he was piously solicitous," says Sulpicius, "to rescue the heretics themselves, as well as the Christians, who were to be troubled under this pretence."—*Dial.* iii. 16. Accordingly, he was pressing in his intervention at court, but Maximus had by this time forgotten the lesson of

humility which, two years since, he and the empress had so dutifully learned; or perhaps he thought, for one reason or another, that he had got an advantage over the bishop, and understood him. Any how, he put off from day to day his answer to Martin's request, whether in behalf of the Spanish Catholics, or of the two friends of Gratian.

Meanwhile Martin refused to communicate with the party of Ithacius, a vigorous step, to which only one bishop out of all who assembled had found himself equal. The Ithacians betook themselves in haste to Maximus, "complaining," says Sulpicius, "that they were prejudged, predisposed of, if the pertinacity of Theognistus," the protesting party, "was armed by the authority of Martin; that the latter ought never to have been allowed to enter; that he was no longer engaged in the mere defence, but in the rescue of the heretics; that nothing was gained by the death of Priscillian, if Martin took satisfaction for it. And last, they threw themselves on the ground, and with tears and lamentations implored the imperial power to show its vigour in its dealings with after all but one individual."—*Dial.* iii. 16. Maximus began to believe that Martin really was a Priscillianist.

However, he both felt a reverence for him, whatever were the grounds of it, and he understood perfectly well that Martin was not to be prevailed on by threats of personal violence. He pursued a way with him which perhaps he had successfully adopted on a former occasion. He gave Martin a private interview, and addressed him in a complimentary manner. He alleged, that the heretics had been punished, not

at the instance of the bishops, but by the secular courts in a regular way for their evil deserts; that such a procedure formed no reason for blaming and separating from Ithacius and the rest; that Theognistus, the only outstanding bishop, had been influenced by personal feelings; and that a Council had acquitted Ithacius. Finding, however, he made no way with Martin, the emperor burst out in anger, quitted him hastily, and gave orders for the execution of the partisans of Gratian. The news of this determination came to Martin during the following night: no time was to be lost; he gave way; he entered the palace; he promised to communicate with the Ithacians, on condition that Narses and Leucadius should be spared, and that the military inquisitors which had been sent into Spain should be recalled. The emperor readily granted his terms in full, and the next day, Felix was consecrated, Martin assisting and communicating with the persecutors of Priscillian. They urged him with much earnestness to sign an instrument in attestation of his concession, but this he refused.

Writers of great piety[1] have not been unwilling to suggest, that extraordinary as was St. Martin's habitual humility, yet he might have experienced some elation of mind from the remarkable honours which he had received from the court on his first visit to Treves; but whatever was the cause, that he might have done better, was soon confessed by himself. Thus ended his intercourse with the great world. He had gained the object which had brought him to Treves; Maximus, too, had gained his: there

[1] Tillemont, Life of S. Mart. 10.

was nothing more to detain him in the imperial city, and the day after his act of concession he set off on his return to Tours.

He went on his way with downcast mind, sighing, as his biographer tells us, to think that he had even for an hour shared in a communion so unhealthy to the soul; when now an occurrence took place, which, it seems, he ever studiously concealed, though his intimate friends got acquainted with it. About ten miles from Treves, his journey lay through deep and lonely woods; he let his companions go forward, and remained by himself, examining his conscience, and first blaming, and then again defending what he had done. While he was thus engaged he was favoured with a supernatural vision: an Angel appeared to him, and said, "Martin, thou art pricked in heart with reason; but no other escape opened to thee. Retrieve thy virtue; resume thy firmness; lest thou risk, not thy renown, but thy salvation."

Martin lived eleven years after this, but he never went to council or meeting of bishops again. And afterwards, when he was engaged with the *energumeni*, or demoniacs, "he used from time to time, to confess to us," says Sulpicius, "with tears, that from the mischief of that communion, which he joined for a moment, and that not in heart, but on compulsion, he was sensible of a diminution of his supernatural gift." Sulpicius also happens to mention in another connexion, and without alluding to what had passed at Treves, that in the last years of his life, "when the prefect Vincentius, a person of singular worth, and as excellent a man in every respect as was to be found in any part of Gaul, passed through Tours, he often

begged of Martin to entertain him in his monastery; alleging the example of blessed Ambrose the bishop, who at that time was said now and then to dine consuls and prefects, but that the man of high mind would not, lest it should give secret entrance to vanity and elation of spirit."—*Dial.* i. 17.

Such self-imposed penances were quite in the spirit of those ages of sanctity. Notice has been taken of Gregory's silence during Lent in a former chapter; and Sulpicius in his old age, on being betrayed for an instant into an advocacy of the doctrines of Pelagius, punished himself with silence to the end of his life.

It may not be out of place to append to this passage of St. Martin's history an account of one of his visions, which seems in various ways to be illustrative, or even mythical of much in it.

"While Martin was praying in his cell, the evil spirit stood before him, environed in a glittering radiance, by such pretence more easily to deceive him, clad also in royal robes, crowned with a golden and jewelled diadem, with shoes covered with gold, with serene face, and bright looks, so as to seem nothing so little as what he was. Martin at first was dazzled at the sight; and for a long while both parties kept silence. At length the evil one began:—'Acknowledge,' he says, 'O Martin, whom thou seest. I am Christ; I am now descending upon earth, and I wished first to manifest myself to thee.' Martin still kept silent, and returned no answer. The devil ventured to repeat his bold pretence. 'Martin, why hesitate in believing, when thou seest I am Christ?' Then he, understanding by revelation of

the Spirit, that it was the evil one and not God, answered, 'Jesus, the Lord, announced not that He should come in glittering clothing, and radiant with a diadem. I will not believe that Christ is come, save in that state and form in which He suffered, *save with the show of the wounds of the Cross.*' At these words, the other vanished forthwith as smoke, and filled the cell with so horrible an odour as to leave indubitable proofs who he was. That this so took place, I know from the mouth of Martin himself, lest any one should think it fabulous."—*Vit. B. M.* 25.

The application of this vision to Martin's age, is obvious; I suppose it means in this day, that Christ comes not in pride of intellect, or reputation for ability. These are the glittering robes in which Satan is now arraying. Many spirits are abroad, more are issuing from the pit: the credentials which they display, are the precious gifts of mind, beauty, richness, depth, originality. Christian, look hard at them with Martin in silence, and then ask for the print of the nails.

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